

Paul Signac

Georges Seurat,
Paul Signac, 1890.
Conté, 36.5 x 31.6 cm.
Private collection.

Author: Paul Signac

Layout:
Baseline Co. Ltd
61A-63A Vo Van Tan Street
4th Floor
District 3, Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam

© Confidential Concepts, worldwide, USA
© Parkstone Press International, New York, USA
Image-Bar www.image-bar.com

All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or adapted without the permission of the copyright holder, throughout the world. Unless otherwise specified, copyright on the works reproduced lies with the respective photographers, artists, heirs or estates. Despite intensive research, it has not always been possible to establish copyright ownership. Where this is the case, we would appreciate notification.

ISBN: 978-1-78160-774-9

Is an artist not someone who strives to create unity within variety by the rhythm of colours and tones, and who puts science to the service of his feelings?

— Paul Signac

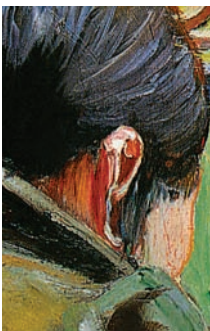


Biography

- 11 November 1863: Paul Signac was born in Paris, to a family of bourgeois merchants.
- 1880: Although his family wished him to pursue architecture as a career, Signac left high school before he had completed his final exams to focus on becoming an artist. He moved to Montmartre and immersed himself in the work of the Impressionists and Claude Monet. He met Berthe Roblès, who he would marry ten years later, who happened to be a distant cousin of Camille Pissaro.
- 1882-1883: His first works depicted the views from Montmartre and Asnières-sur-Seine (his family home), and studies of women, notably of Berthe Roblès. His painting was heavily influenced by Monet.
- 1884: He showed his first canvas at the Salon des Indépendants, which was located in the courtyards of the Tuileries, and participated in the foundation of the Société des Artistes Indépendants. He befriended Georges Seurat, who was to have a great influence on him. At this time he also encountered Pissaro.
- December 1886: Seurat, Signac, and Pissaro had their work shown at the time of an impressive exhibition organised by the Société des Artistes Indépendants. Their techniques were completely different; they painted using slight brushstrokes, and juxtaposed their pure colours. It was the technique known as Divisionism. The term "Neo-Impressionism" was used for the first time by the art critic Félix Fénéon.
- 1887: Signac felt a strong attachment to the sea and painted numerous seascapes. He moved to the South of France and encountered Van Gogh.

P. Signac

- 1889: He spent the summer at the Mediterranean coast, visiting Van Gogh who was also located there.
- 1891: After Seurat's death, Signac left Paris for Brittany, and then left to settle in Saint-Tropez with his wife and his mother. He painted his first luminous watercolours and tried his hand at large decorative paintings.
- 1893: After the publication of the first edition of Delacroix's *Journal*, Signac decided to also write a journal. In this, he explained the evolution of his own work and his doubts as well as his reflections on being an artist during that period. He also renounced the practice of painting outdoors.
- 1896: He drafted *From Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism*, a work in which he explained the technique which inspired Neo-Impressionism, appearing in 1899.
- 1902: He showed one hundred watercolours at Siegfried Bing's art gallery.
- 1908: He became President of the Société des Artistes Indépendants, and so remained until his death. In this year certain painters embarked on a pilgrimage to Signac's home in Saint-Tropez, notably Matisse and Maurice Denis. He also travelled to Venice.
- 1911: He exhibited his watercolours *The Bridges of Paris* at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery. Watercolours took precedence over oil paintings.
- 1915: He moved to Antibes and was named *Peintre officiel de la Marine*.
- 1929: He started a series of watercolours of the French ports, which led him to visit numerous coastal regions.
- 15 August 1935: Signac died, aged 72, following a prolonged illness.



DOCUMENTS

Divisionism

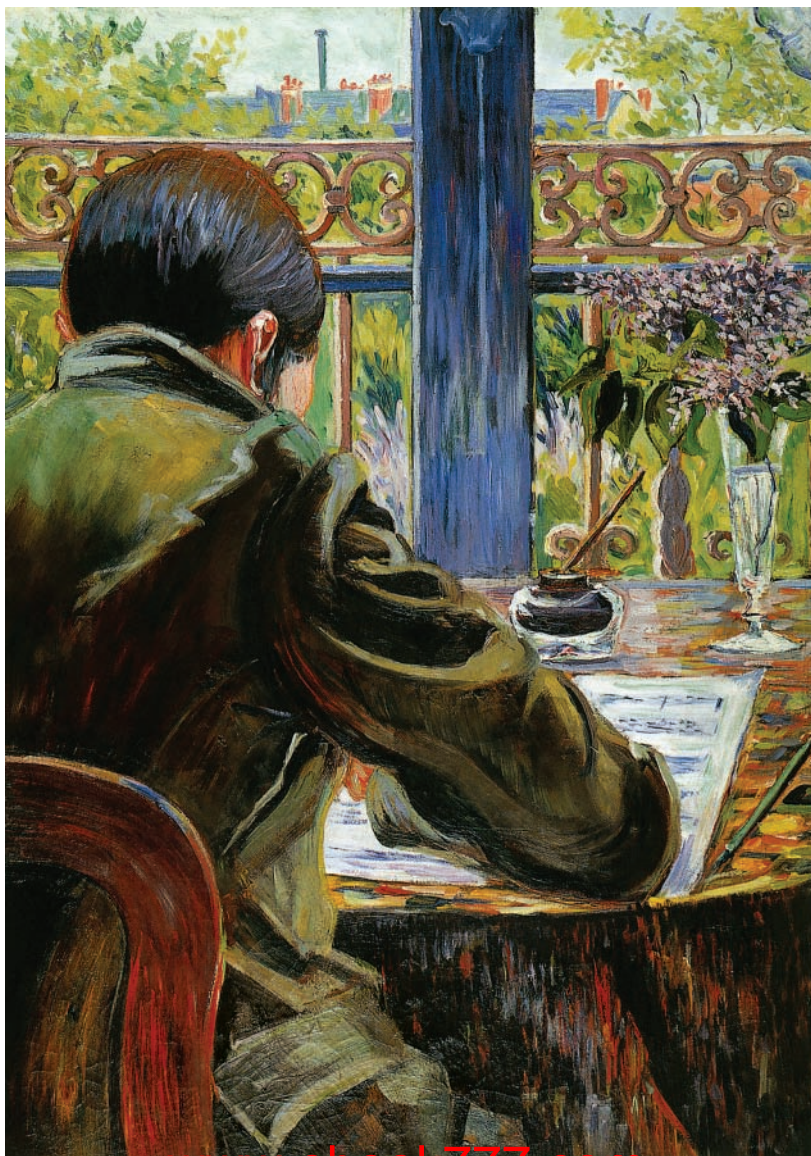
The belief that the Neo-Impressionists are artists who cover their canvasses with small multicoloured dots is a fairly widespread misconception. We will demonstrate later, but affirm now, that this mediocre process of dots has nothing in common with the aesthetics of the painters who we are here championing, nor with their employed technique of Divisionism.

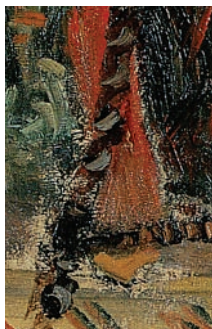
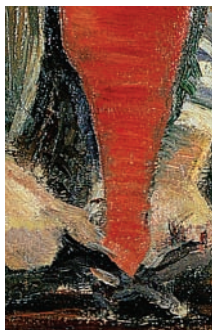
Asnières Study (Charles Torquet Seen from Behind)

1883

Oil on canvas, 92.5 x 65 cm

Private collection





Neo-Impressionism does not stipple, but divides. And yet, to divide is to assure all benefits of luminosity, of colour, and of harmony. This is through the optical blending of uniquely pure pigments (all the colours of a rainbow, and all of their tones), the separation of different elements (restricted colour, colour from illumination, and their effects, etc.), the balance of these elements and their proportions (according to the laws of contrast, degradation, and radiation), and the choice of brushstrokes proportioned to the dimensions of the canvas.

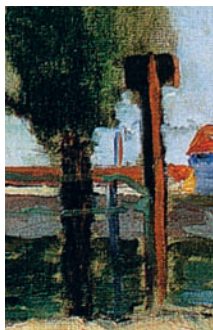
Red Silk Stockings

1883

Oil on canvas, 61 x 46 cm

Private collection





The method formulated into these four points therefore governs colour for Neo-Impressionists, of whom the majority apply most mysterious laws disciplining line and direction to their work, thereby ensuring a harmony of beautiful order.



Thus informed about line and colour, the artist will certainly determine the linear and chromatic composition of his painting by using the dominant directions, tones and hues appropriate for the subject he is about to depict.



The Road to Gennevilliers

1883

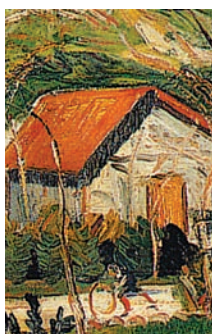
Oil on canvas, 73 x 91 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris





Before going any further, let's refer ourselves to the authority of the clear and distinguished genius of Eugène Delacroix. It was this great artist who enacted the rules of colour, line, and composition which we have just laid out and which summarise Divisionism.



We will examine each part of the aesthetics and technique of the Neo-Impressionists one by one, and then compare them along the same lines as suggested by Delacroix in his letters, articles, and three volumes of his journal (*Journal d'Eugène Delacroix*). In this way we will



Saint Peter's Square

1883-1884

Oil on canvas, 65.5 x 64.5 cm

Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel





show that these artists are only following the master's instruction and continuing his research.

The aim of the Neo-Impressionists' technique is to obtain a maximum of colour and light. Yet, was this aim not clearly indicated by Delacroix's beautiful cry: "Grey is the enemy of every painter!"? To achieve this bright and colourful lustre, the Neo-Impressionists only used pure colours approaching, as far as material can approach light, the colours of the rainbow. And does this not also obey the advice of he who wrote: "Banish all earth colours?"

Rue Caulaincourt

1884

Oil on canvas, 35 x 27 cm

Gift of Mr and Mrs David Weill, Musée Carnavalet, Paris





Of these pure colours, which they always respect and make sure not to contaminate as they mix them on the palette (obviously except white and between neighbouring colours, in order to achieve all the colours of the rainbow, and their tones), they layer them in clean brushstrokes of small dimensions. Through optical blending they obtain the desired result, with the advantage that, whilst pigment blending tends to darken and fade, all optical blending tends towards clarity and brilliance.

Port-en-Bessin. The Fish Market

1884

Oil on canvas, 60 x 92 cm
Tai Cheung Holdings Ltd





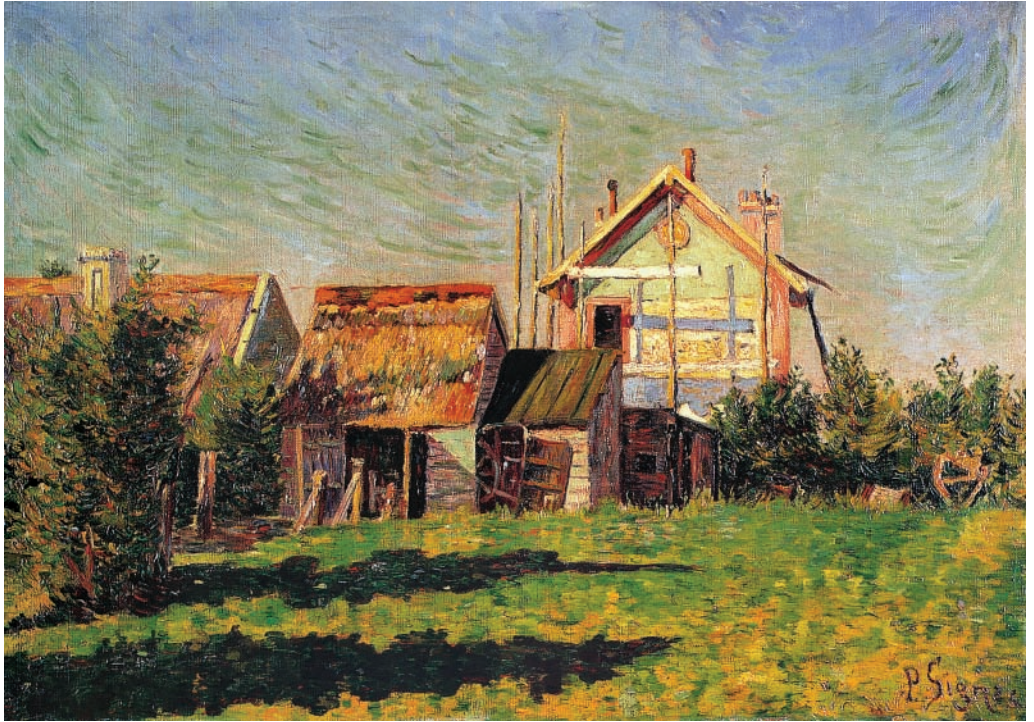
The Neo-Impressionists only generalised the logic of Delacroix's treatment, imposed on green and purple, and applied it to other colours. Tipped off by the great master's research, and educated by Chevreul's work, they established the use of this method, as it is unique and certain to secure both light and colour. Any untoward pigment mixture can be replaced by its optical blend.

The artists strive to use every flat shade of colour, which may seem feeble and dull, to make even the least part of the canvas shimmer by the optical mixing of brushstrokes of juxtaposed colour gradients. However,

Port-en-Bessin. La Valleeuse

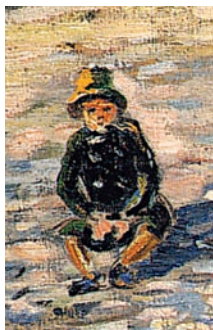
1884

Oil on canvas, 45.5 x 64.5 cm
Museum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo

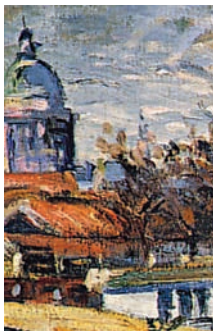




it was Delacroix who first clearly stated the principle and advantages of this method: "It is good that the brushstrokes are not physically blended. They blend naturally at the distance desired by the laws of agreement which link them. Colour, in this way, obtains more energy and freshness."

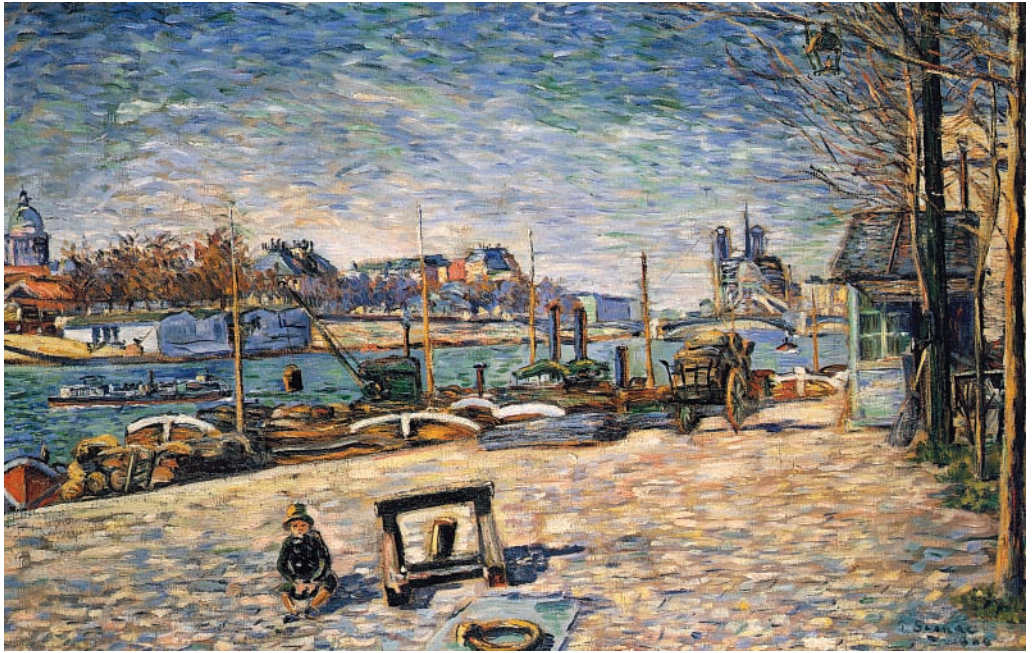


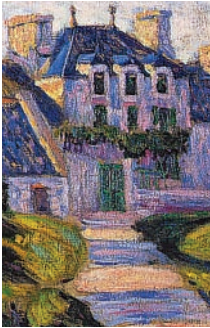
The breakdown of colour hues through diminishing brushstroke gradients, a very important part of Divisionism, had been anticipated by the great painter. It was clear that his passion for colour would inevitably lead to seeing the benefits of optical blends.



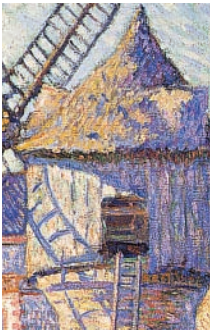
La Seine. Quai d'Austerlitz
(The Seine from Pont d'Austerlitz)

Oil on canvas, 60 x 91 cm
Collection Kakinuma, Tokyo





But, to assure optical blends, the Neo-Impressionists were forced to use brushstrokes of small dimensions, so that the different elements could, from a distance, reform the desired colour shade so as not be perceived in isolation.



Delacroix had considered using these reduced brushstrokes and suspected that these resources could provide him with commissions, as is evidenced in this note he wrote: "Yesterday, working on the child close to the woman on the left in *Orpheus*, I remembered these



Saint-Briac. The Mill

1885

Oil on canvas, 60 x 92 cm

Private collection





small brushstrokes akin to a miniature in Raphael's *Virgin*, which I saw on the Rue Grange-Batelière."

For the Neo-Impressionists, the diverse elements, which should reconstruct hues through their optical blending, are distinct from one another. Light and restricted colours are clearly separate and the artist regulates first one and then the other, at his discretion.

This principle of the separation of the elements is not to be found at all in Delacroix's statement: "It is necessary to reconcile colour and light."

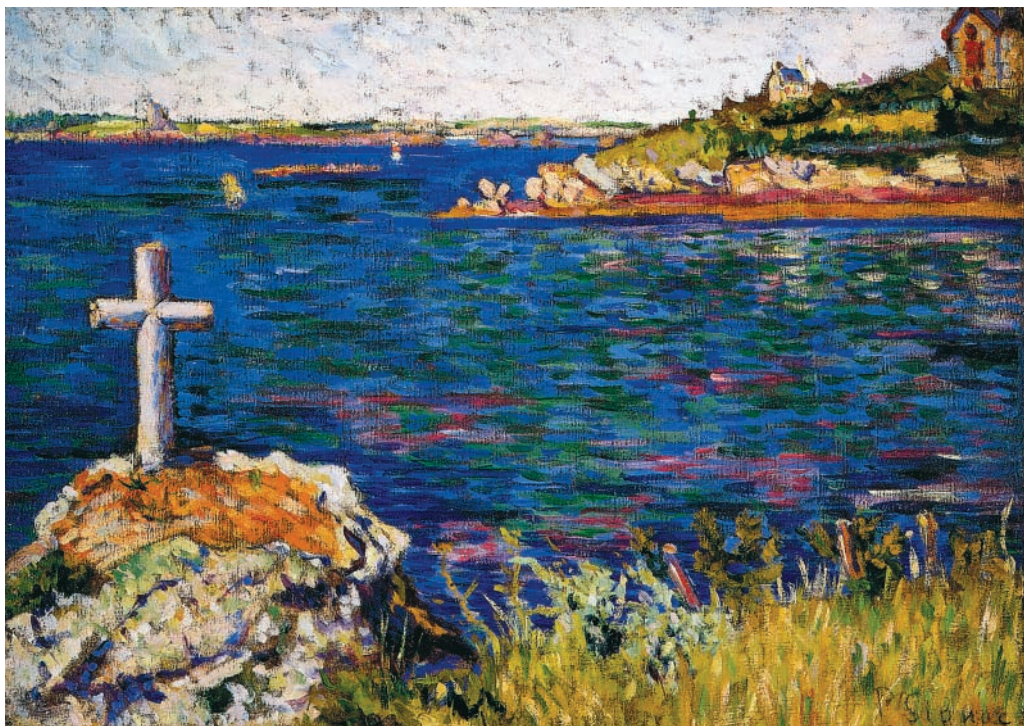


Saint-Briac. The Cross of the Sailors. High Tide

1885

Oil on canvas, 33 x 46 cm

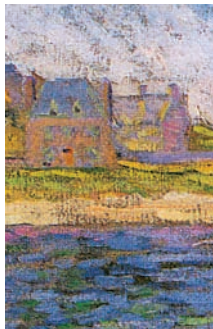
Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis





The contrast of tone and shade, which is solely observed by the Neo-Impressionists out of contemporary artists, is not defined and imposed by the master: "Satisfaction is found in the spectacle of things; beauty, proportion, contrast, and harmony of colour."

This note from one of Delacroix's Moroccan travel diaries shows how much importance Delacroix attached to the laws of contrast and complementary colours, which he knew to be inexhaustible sources of harmony and power. Following the Neo-Impressionist technique, light (yellow, orange, or red, according to the time of day and

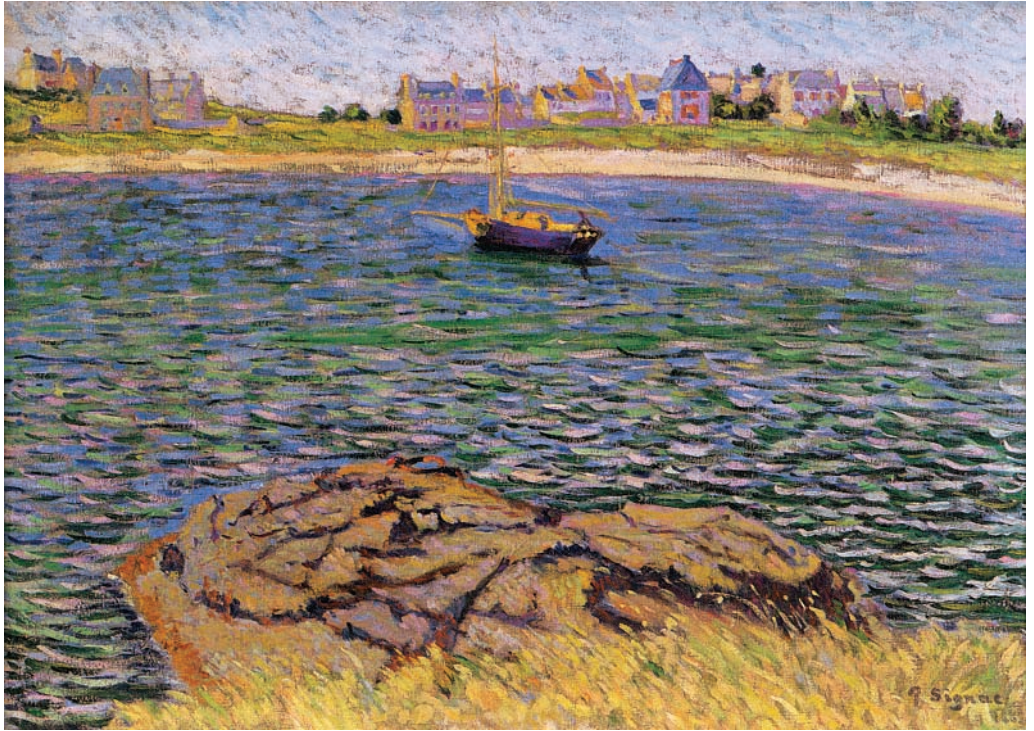


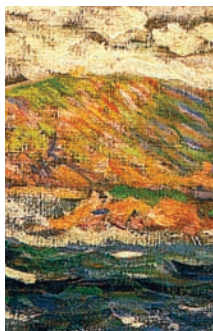
Saint-Briac, Le Béchet

1885

Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm

Private collection





the effect added to the specific shades) would warm or gild that which had the most lighting in the painting. Shadow, a faithful complement to its regulatory light, is purple, blue, or bluish-green and its related elements just modify and cool the darker aspects of removed colour. These cold shadows and warm lights, which challenge and tease each other, make up the contour and model, spread, hindering, or contrasting, across the entire painting, illuminating here, dimming there, in place and proportion determined by chiaroscuro.

Saint-Briac. Mild Breeze from the Northwest

1885

Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm

Ray and Dagmar Dolby Collection, San Francisco





However, these yellow or orange lights and these blue or purple shadows, which have aroused so much amusement, are here prescribed and categorised by Delacroix: "At Saint-Denis du Saint-Sacrement I had to paint light with pure chrome yellow and half-shades with Prussian blue."



The Neo-Impressionists have often been reproached for exaggerating the use of colour, of painting with garish and gaudy paint. The true Colourist painter, that is to say, someone who, like the Neo-Impressionists,



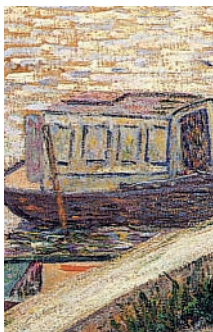
Still Life with a Book

1885

Oil on canvas, 32 x 46 cm

Alte Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin





submits colour to the rules of harmony, will never have cause to fear seeming garish by being too colourful. He will leave the more faint-hearted to wish “not colour, but more the nuance” and will not fear to look for radiance and power through all possible means. As Delacroix warns: “Painting always appears greyer than it is, by its oblique position in daylight...”, and he displayed the unfortunate effect of dull and discoloured painting: “It appears that it is effectively: muddy, bleak, and lifeless. You are earth, and to earth you will return.”

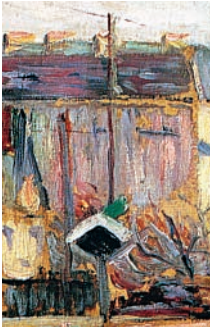
The Shore. Asnières

1885

Oil on canvas, 73 x 100 cm

Private collection





This means of expression, the optical blending of small strokes of colour, placed methodically against each other, hardly permits address or virtuosity; the hand has very little importance; only the painter's brain and eye has a role to play. By not allowing themselves to become tempted by the charms of a brushstroke, by choosing a technique which is lacking in brilliance but conscientious and precise, the Neo-Impressionists have heeded Eugène Delacroix's entreaty.

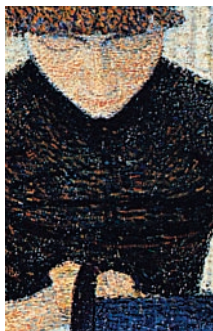
In order to defend these small brushstrokes, shockingly excessive for those who are incapable of sampling the

The Division between Bois-Colombes

1885

Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam





harmonious benefits of the results and who take pause at the novelty of this medium, let us refer to what Delacroix mentioned about the application of paint. All that he said of this style, which he used to give colour more splendour and brilliance, can be applied to the process used with the same aim, by the Neo-Impressionists: "In all the arts there are methods of adopted and agreed implementation, and we are but imperfect connoisseurs, when we do not know how to interpret these indications of thought. The proof of this is the vulgar preference to all other paintings because they are smoother and less detailed in their application."

The Milliners

1885-1886

Oil on canvas, 116 x 89 cm
E.G. Bührle Foundation, Zurich



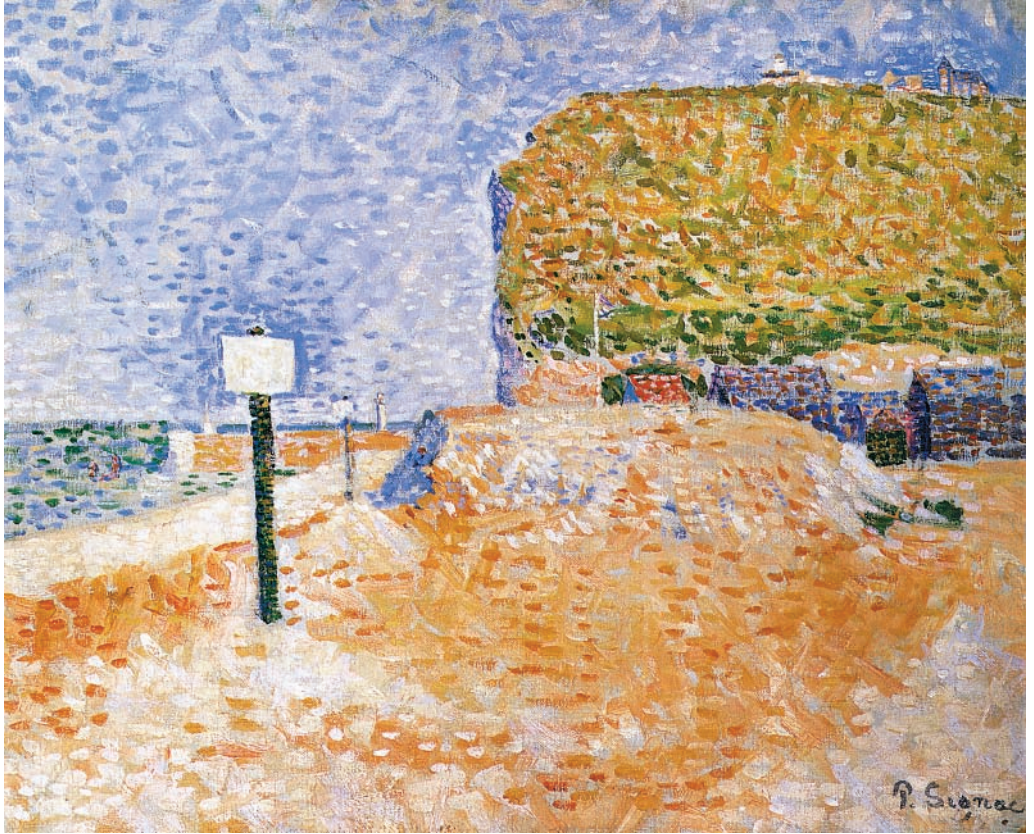


At a distance, which is made necessary by the paintings' dimensions, the Neo-Impressionists' technique will not be shocking. From afar the brushstrokes will disappear and only the luminous and harmonious effects which they procure will be perceived. Perhaps this next remark of Delacroix's will cause some to go to lengths to take the necessary steps required to be able to understand and judge a Divisionist painting: "For the rest, everything depends on the distance required to look at a painting. From a particular distance brushstrokes melt into the whole, but it gives the overall depiction an emphasis which a simple blend of hues is not able to produce."

Fécamp. Sun

1886

Oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm
Jan Krugier Collection, Geneva





Delacroix tried several times to persuade those who essentially only like the smoother and less detailed paintings; those who are disconcerted by every vibrant and colourful work of art. He cautioned them: "Time restores the work's definitive body by erasing all brushstrokes, the first as well as the last."

His repeated observations, and precepts which Neo-Impressionists strive to follow, clearly show the importance which he attached to the role of lines, for they had failed to ensure the harmony of their colours



Snow. Boulevard de Clichy, Paris

1886

Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm

Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis





through the benefits of rhythmic arrangement and measured balance. "The influence of principal lines is immense in a composition. ... The straight line is nowhere to be found in nature."

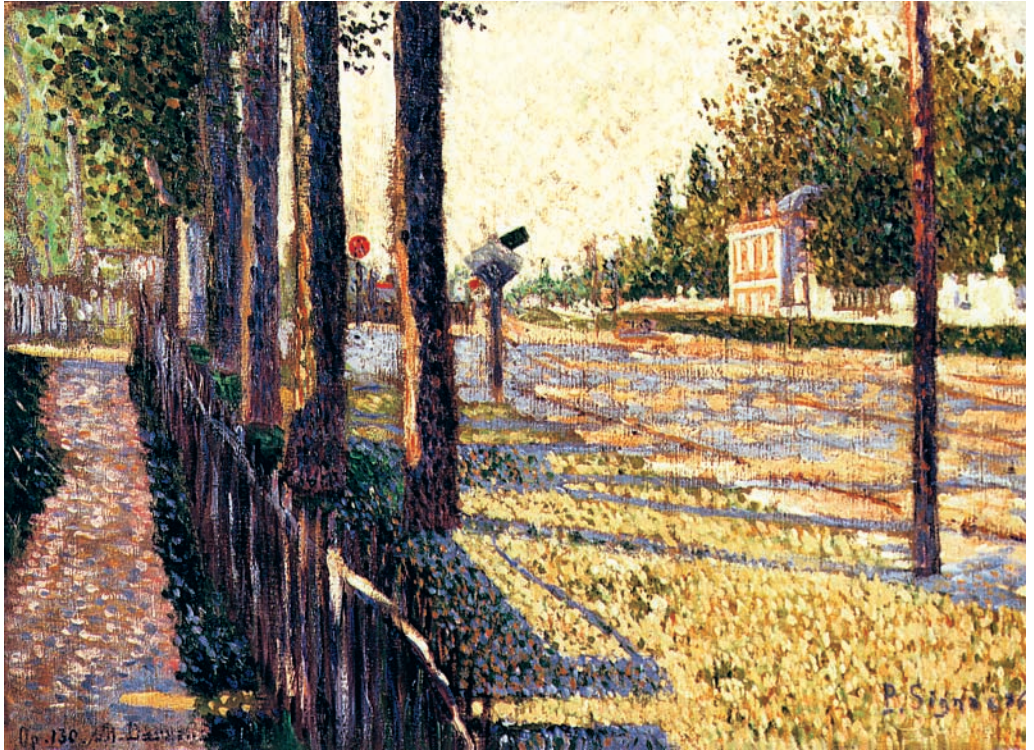
The Neo-Impressionist will think about complementing his linear composition, once it is determined, through a combination of direction and colour appropriate to the subject and his design, the dominants of which will vary depending on whether he wants to express joy, calm, sadness, or intermediary feelings. Being preoccupied in this way by the principled effect of lines and colours,

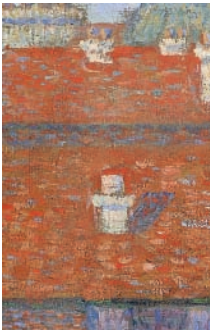
The Division. Bois-Colombes. Opus 13

1886

Oil on canvas, 33 x 46 cm

City Art Gallery, Leeds





he can do nothing but once more follow Delacroix's teaching. Here, the master thought of the considerable element of beauty, much neglected by many of today's painters: "All this arranged with the harmony of lines and colour. ... Colour is nothing if it is not suitable to the subject and if it does not glorify the effect of painting through the imagination."

Although the Neo-Impressionists strive to express the splendours of light and colour which nature offers, and to draw the elements of their works from this source of all beauty, they think that an artist should choose and

Gasometers at Clinchy

1886

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne





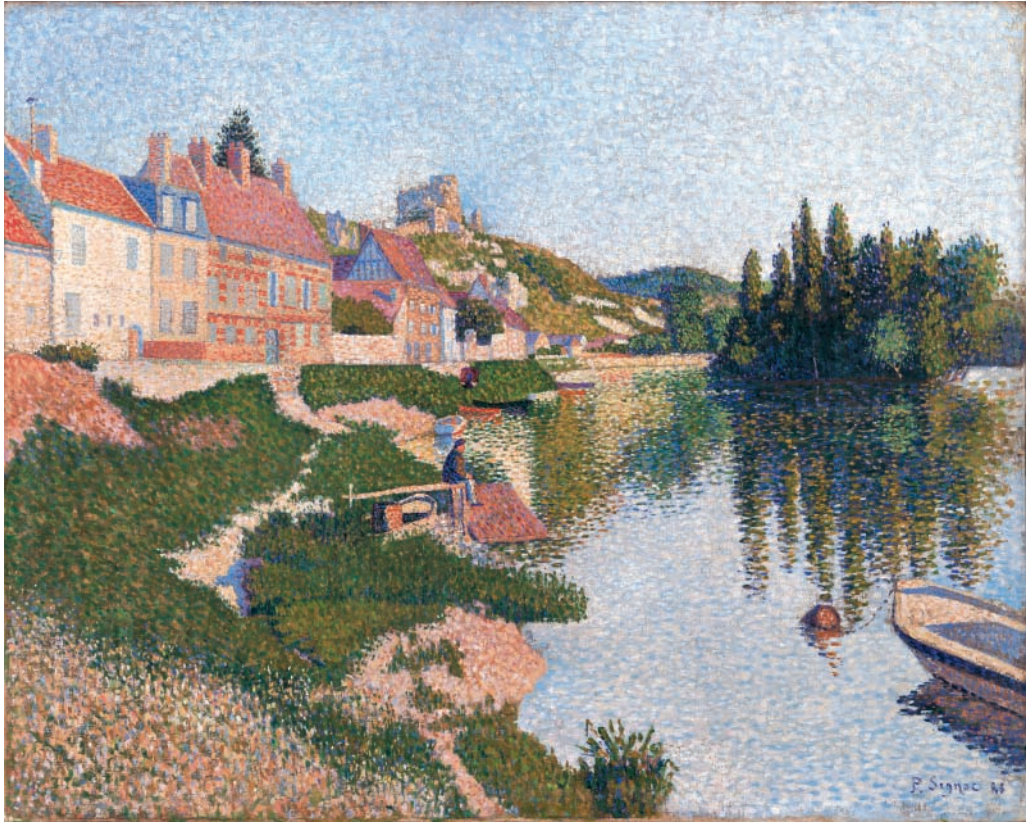
arrange these elements, and that a painting which is linearly and chromatically composed will be of a superior order than that which offers the chance to directly copy nature. To defend this principal they quoted Delacroix: "Nature is only a dictionary, in it we look for words ... there we find the elements that make up a sentence or a story; but nobody has ever considered the dictionary as a composition in the poetical sense of the word."

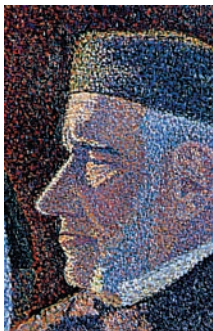
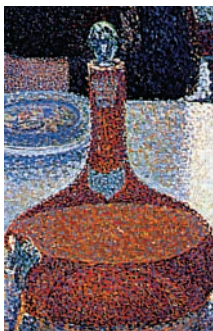
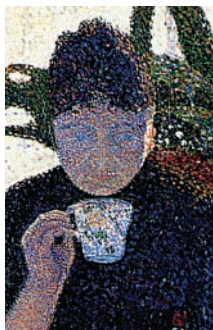
A big reproach that has been made of them is that, as artists, they are overly educated. And yet, we see that

Les Andelys

1886

Oil on paper, 65.3 x 81.5 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris





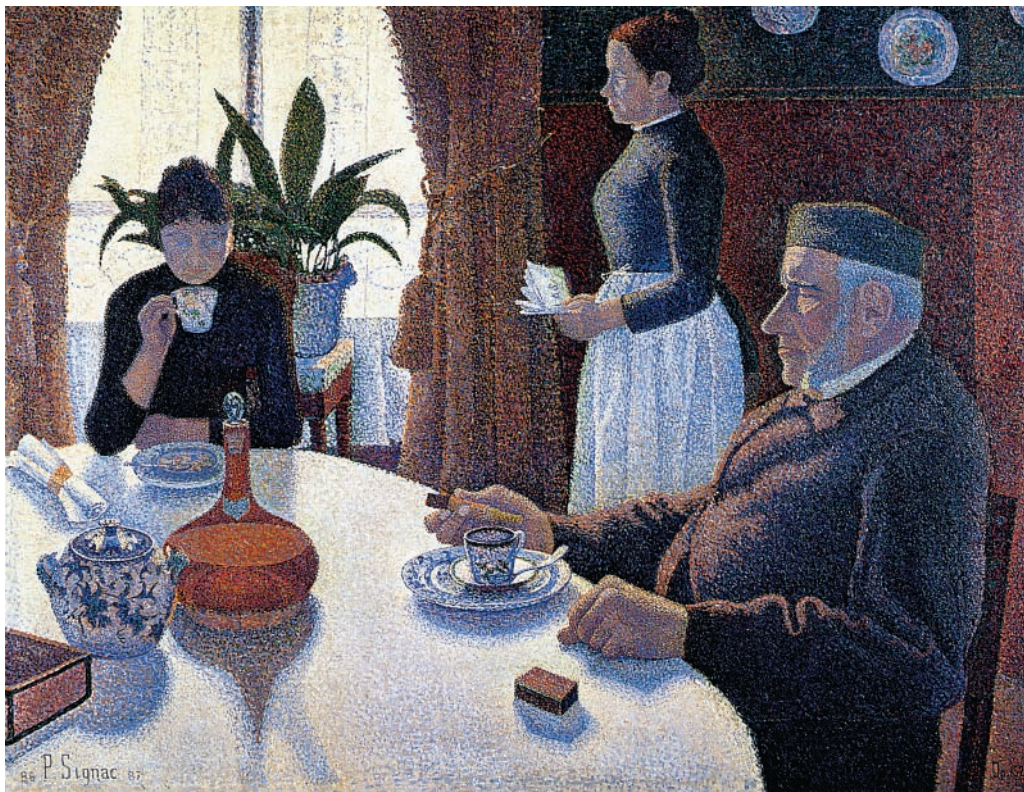
these are just four or five precepts outlined by Chevreul, which every child in primary school should know. But let us note that, from this period of time onwards, Delacroix pressed for the artist's right to not be ignorant of the laws of colour. "A Colourist's art is evidently in some respects due to mathematics and music."

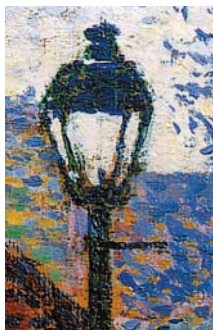
It is curious to note that even in the smallest details of their technique, the Neo-Impressionists put Delacroix's advice into practice. They only paint on substrates of white undercoats, which cause light to pass across the

The Dining Room. Opus 152

1886-1887

Oil on canvas, 89 x 115 cm
Museum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo





coloured brushstrokes by giving them more brilliance and freshness. Furthermore, Delacroix noted the excellent results of this process: "That which gives so much finesse and lustre to paint on white paper; it is without doubt this transparency which comes from the basic white nature of paper. It is likely that the first Venetians painted on extraordinarily white backgrounds."

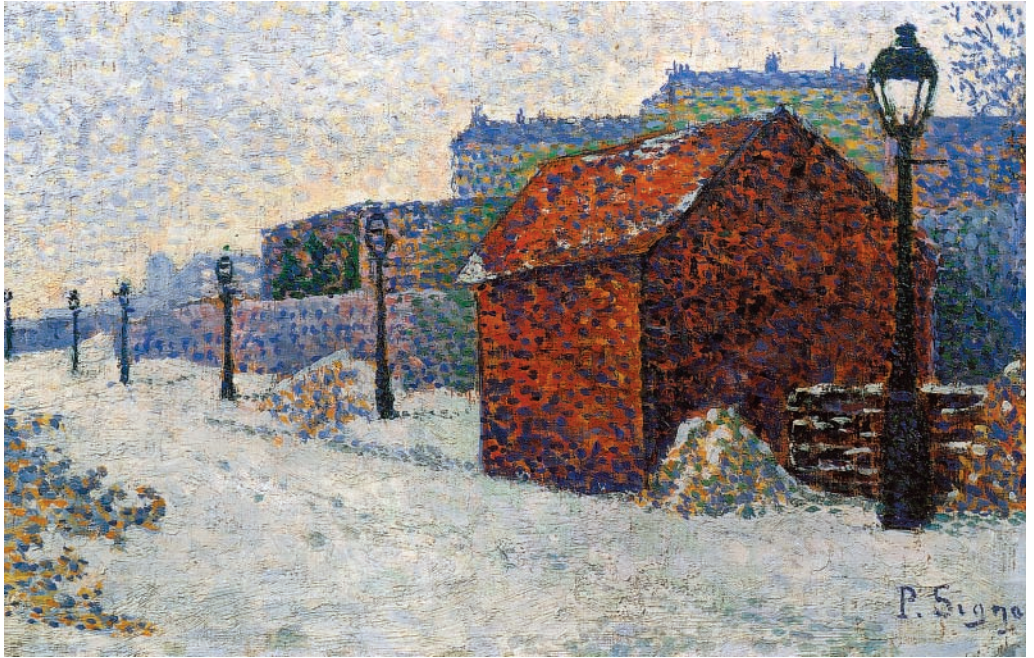
The Neo-Impressionists renounced the use of gilded frames, the bright garishness of which alters or destroys the agreement of the painting. They generally use white

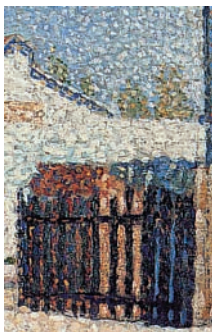
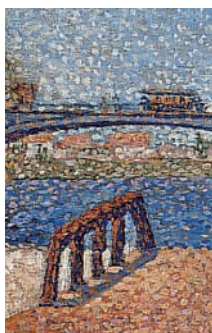
Snow in Montmartre

1887

Oil on canvas, 15 x 25 cm

Private collection, USA





frames which offer an excellent link between paint and background, and which highlight colour saturation without disturbing the overall harmony.

Delacroix is a perfect harmonist who hesitates to introduce strange or perhaps discordant elements into his work. He presented the advantages of a white frame, as he dreamt to adorn it with his decorations of the Saint-Sulpice: "They (the frames) can influence the effects of a painting for better or for worse – gold is nowadays lavish – their shape in respect to the nature of a painting."

Quai de Clichy. Sun

1887

Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm

The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore





THE CONTRIBUTION OF DELACROIX

The Colourist Evolution

Delacroix therefore understood several of the advantages which assured the Colourists of the use of optical and contrasting blends. He even presented the benefits of a more methodical and precise technique than his own, which permitted even more clarity of light and sharpness of colour to shine through.

In studying the painters who, in this century, were the representatives of the Colourist tradition, we see them



Clipper. Opus 155

1887

Oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm

Private collection





lightening their palettes generation to generation, to obtain more light and colour. Delacroix would help these studies and research Constable and Turner; Jongkind and the Impressionists would profit from the contribution of the romantic master; and finally, the Impressionist technique would evolve into the way of Neo-Impressionism: Divisionism.

Barely having left Guérin's workshop in 1818, Delacroix understood how insufficient his palette was up until that point; overloaded with dark and muddy colours.

Collioure. The Beach Town. Opus 165

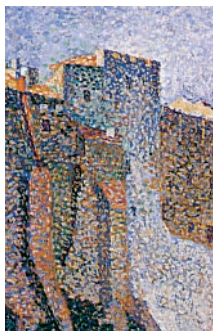
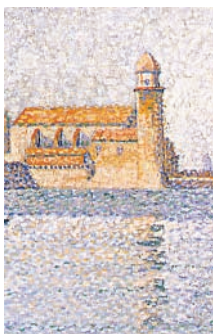
1887

Oil on canvas, 62.9 x 80 cm

Robert Lehman Collection

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





To paint *The Massacre at Chios* (1824), he dared to eliminate the use of ochre and useless earth colours, and to replace them with intense, pure colours of beauty: cobalt blue, emerald green, and rose madder. Despite this audacity, he soon felt himself to be once again empty. It was in vain that he used a quantity of half-tones and half-shades on his palette, carefully prepared in advance. He confirmed the need for new resources and, for his decoration of the Salon de la Paix, in the Palace of Versailles, he enriched his palette with the tone of

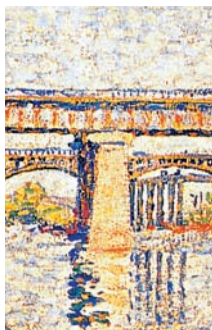
Collioure. Faubourg Beach. Opus 166

1887

Oil on canvas, 60 x 89 cm

Private collection





cadmium pigments, the yellow of zinc, and the energy of vermillion: the most intense colours at a painter's disposal.

It is worth noting that these colours, pure and true, are precisely those which later made up, excluding all others, the simplified palette of the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists.

Perpetually tormented by the desire to achieve more lustre and luminosity, Delacroix was not content to have merely improved his tools, he strove to perfect the way in which they served him.

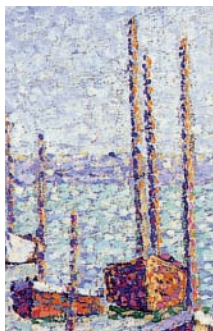
Stern of a Boat. Opus 175

1888

Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm

Private collection





If a harmonious combination in nature surprised him, or if the chance of a colour blend put him in the way of a beautiful shade, he quickly jotted it down in one of his numerous notebooks. He went to museums to study which colours were employed by Titian, Veronese, Velasquez, and Rubens. By comparing his colours to those of these masters, it appeared to him that his were always too feeble and dark. He made many copies of their works, to better catch the secrets of their dominance. Amongst their richness, he gleaned and adapted all the results of

Portrieux. Masts. Opus 182

1888

Oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm

Private collection





his studies for his benefit without sacrificing anything of his own character.

If the colour of *The Massacre at Chios* is already more sumptuous than that of *The Barque of Dante*, it is due to the influence of the English master Constable.

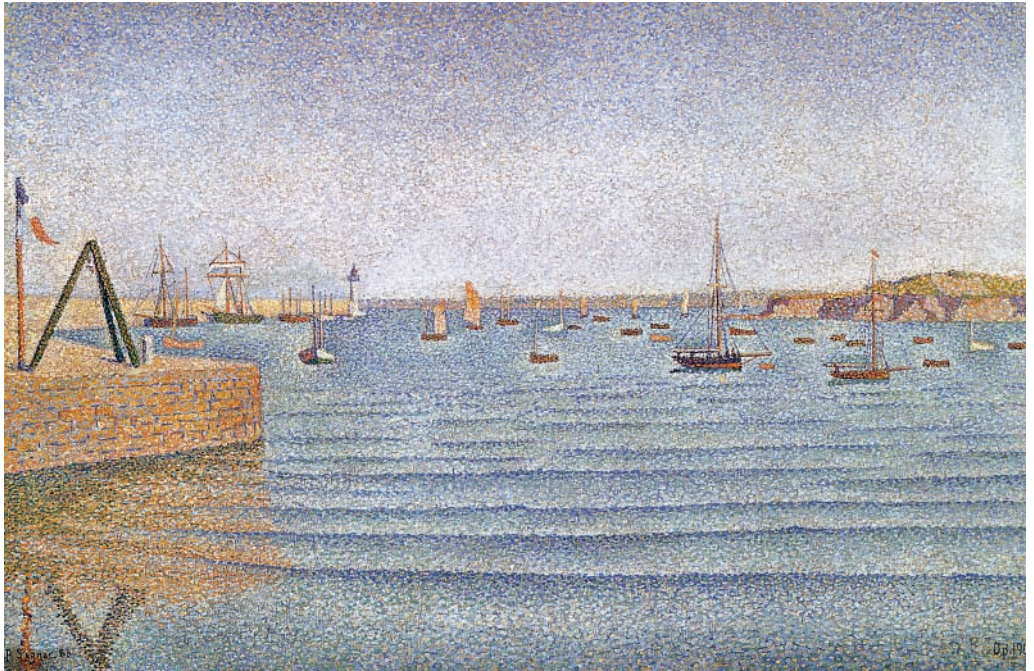
In 1824, Delacroix had finished his work of *The Massacre at Chios*, which was intended for the Salon. A few days before the opening, he was able to see some paintings by Constable, which an amateur French collector had just acquired and were to

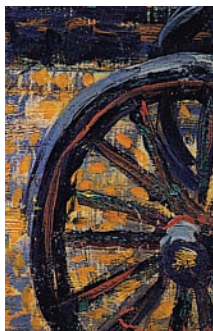
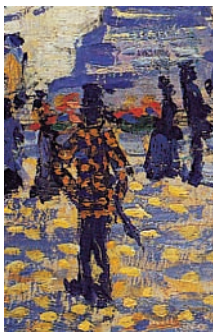
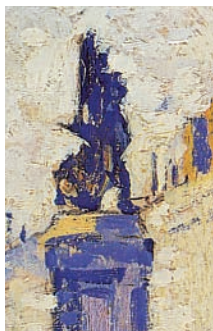


Portrieux. The Tide. Opus 190

1888

Oil on canvas, 60 x 92 cm
Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart





be included in this exhibition. He was struck by their colour and luminosity which, to him, seemed wondrous. By studying their style, he perceived that instead of being painted with flat tones, they were made up of a quantity of small juxtaposed brushstrokes, which reformed themselves, from a short distance, in shades of a much superior intensity than those of his own paintings. This was a revelation for Delacroix: in only a few days he completely repainted his canvas, hammering out colour, which he had hitherto distributed flat on the canvas,

Place de Clichy

1888

Oil on wood, 27.3 x 35.6 cm

Robert Lehman Collection

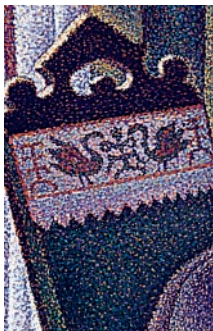
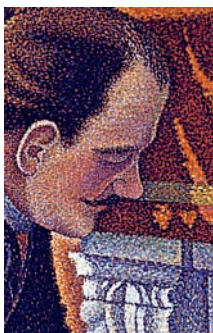
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





in non-fluid brushstrokes, and made them vibrate with the aid of transparent glazes. Immediately he saw his painting unify, aerate, illuminate, and gain strength and reality. As a result, Delacroix, a genius confident in himself, is highly recognised to have been influenced by the English master.

In 1824, at the time when he painted *The Massacre at Chios*, he wrote in his journal: "Have seen the works by Constable. This Constable does me a world of good."



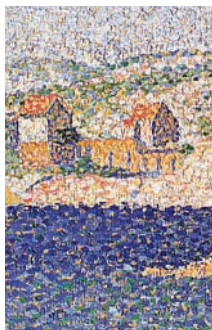
Sunday Afternoon

1888-1890

Oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm

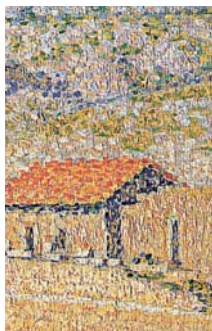
Private collection





Then, a bit further on: "I again saw a sketch by Constable: an admirable and incredible thing."

It is therefore certain that it was through Constable that Delacroix was instructed in the benefits of colour degradation. He immediately saw the considerable advantages which he could take from it. From this moment, he eliminated all flat tones and strived, through glazing and shading, to make his colours come alive. It was soon that the initiate, better taught with his resources than science offered the Colourists, became the initiator.



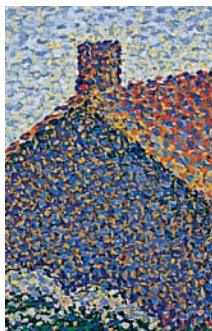
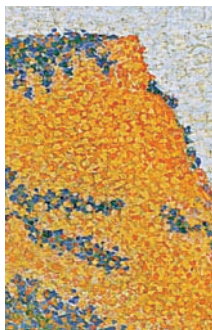
The Jetty at Cassis. Opus 198

1889

Oil on canvas, 46.4 x 65.1 cm

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





In 1825, still very moved by this revelation, and sickened by insignificant and weak painting by artists then in vogue in France (Regnault, Girodet, Gérard, Guérin, Lethière, and the poor students of David, who he preferred to Prud'hon and Gros), Delacroix decided to go to London to study the English Colourist masters. His friends, the Fielding brothers and Bonington, gave him much enthusiastic praise for this. He returned marvelling at such splendour which he had never dreamed of, of Turner, Wilkie, Lawrence, and Constable, and immediately put their teaching into practice.

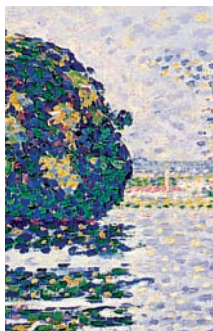
Cassis. Cape Canaille. Opus 200

1889

Oil on canvas, 65 x 82 cm

Private collection





To Constable, as we have already said, he owed his hatred of flat shades and painting by shading; his love of intense and pure colour was influenced by Turner's paintings, already free of all hindrances. The unforgettable memory of these strange and enchanting colours spurred him on until his final days.

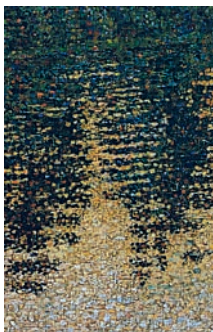
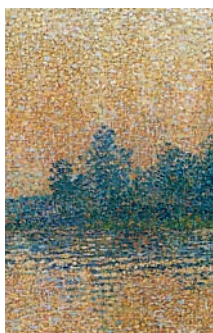
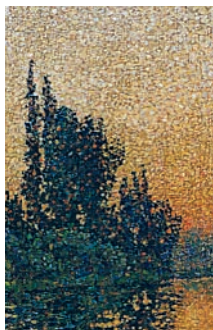
His trip to Morocco (1832) proved even more profitable for him than his trip to England. He returned dazzled by light and intoxicated by the powerful and harmonious state of oriental colour. He studied the

Herblay. Shore. Opus 204

1889

Oil on canvas, 60 x 92 cm
Ridley-Tree Collection, California



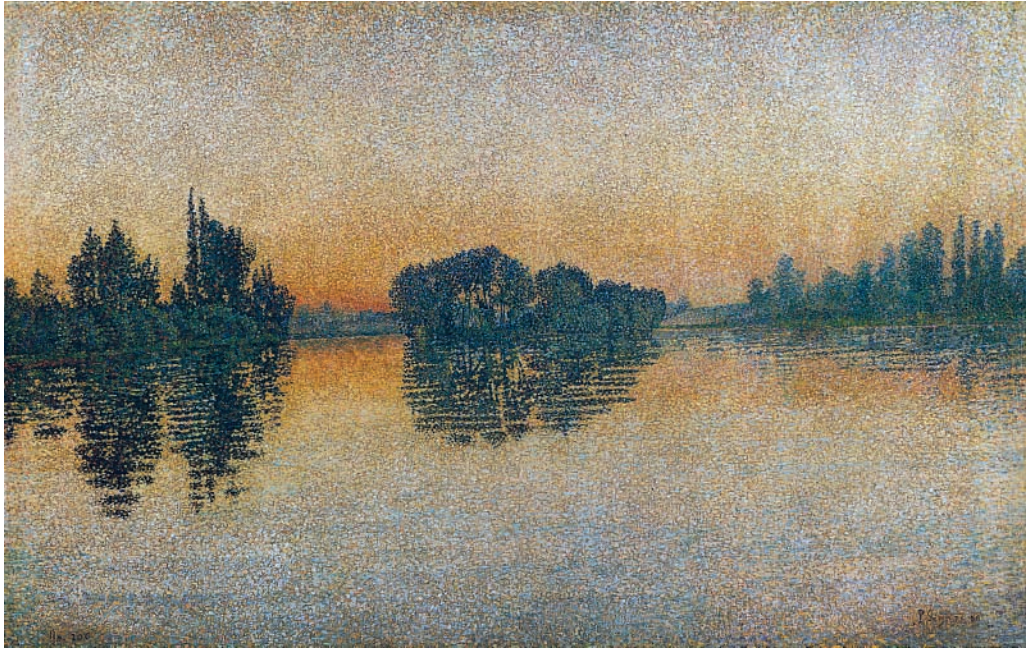


colours of tapestries, fabrics, and ceramics. He understood that the elements from which these were made, which separately were intense and practically garish, were reformed in hues of extreme delicacy and juxtaposed following fixed rules, ensuring harmony. He found that a coloured surface is only agreeable and luminous so far as it is not smooth or uniform and that colour is only beautiful if it vibrates with a flickering lustre which enlivens it. He quickly discovered the secrets and rules of the oriental tradition. This understanding allowed him

Herblay. Sunset. Opus 206

1889

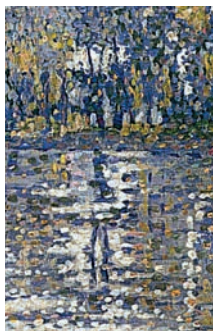
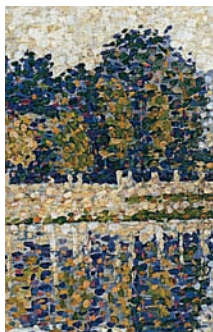
Huile sur toile, 58 x 90 cm
Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow





to later risk the most audacious compilations of colour shade, of the most violent contrasts, all whilst remaining soft and harmonious. Dating from this period of his work, we can always find a little of this flamboyant, melodious, and resounding Orientalism. His enduring impressions of Morocco made his chromatics varied, his agreements soft, and his contrasts most dazzling.

Upon his return to France, knowledgeable in the works by Bourgeois and Chevreul, he stated that the precepts of the Oriental tradition were in perfect



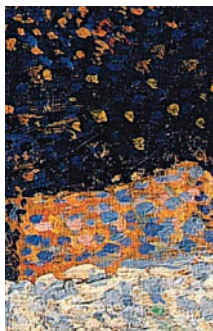
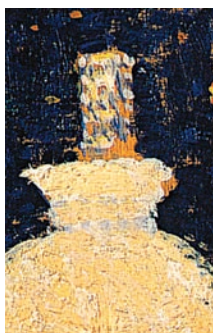
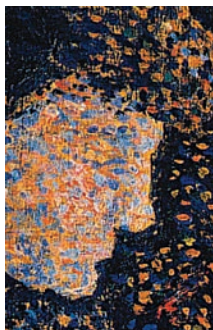
River's Edge. The Seine at Herbley. Opus 208

1889

Oil on canvas, 33 x 55 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris





agreement with modern science. Moreover, when he visited the Louvre to study Veronese, upon observing these works he said: "All of which I know, I have learnt it from him." He too had been instructed in the secrets and magic of Oriental colour, most likely by Asian and African artists, who, in his time, had brought to Venice the riches of their art and their industry.

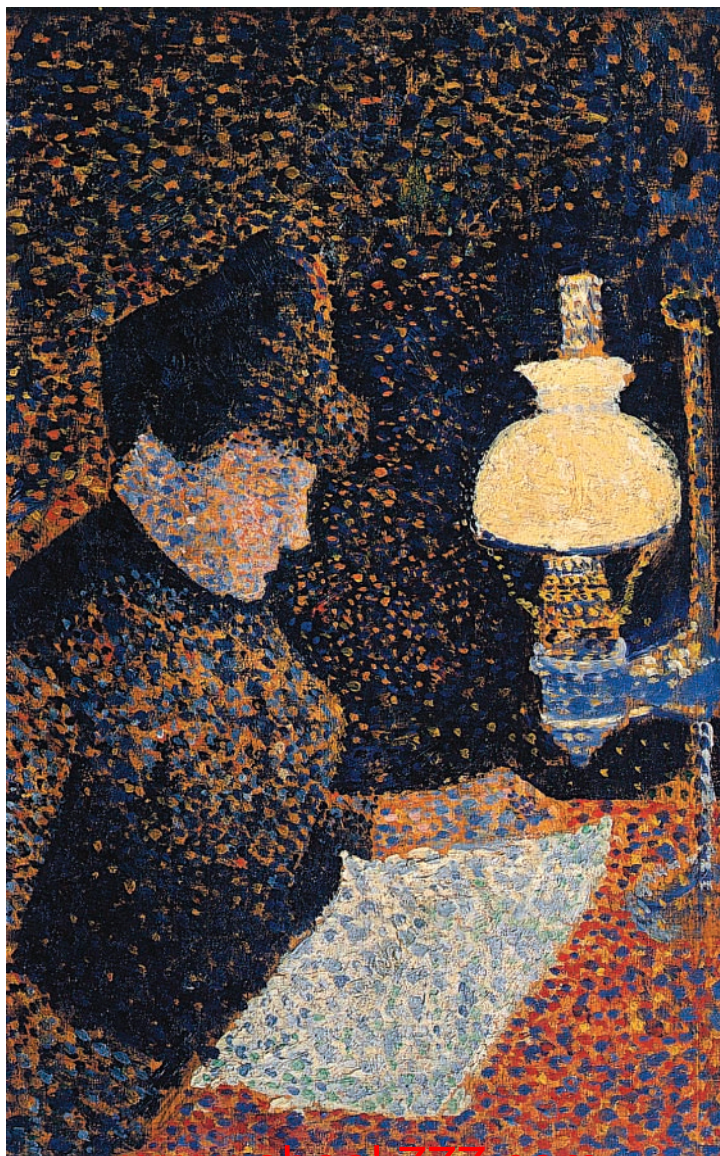
He realised that the understanding of the precise rules which regulate the harmony of colour, the application of which he had discovered in the works of the Colourist masters and in Oriental decoration, was a great escape

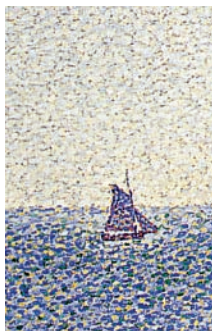
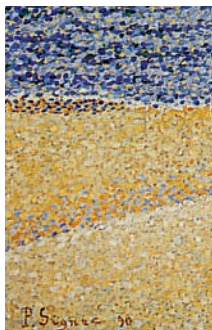
Woman by a Lamp

1890

Oil on wood, 26.5 x 17.4 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris





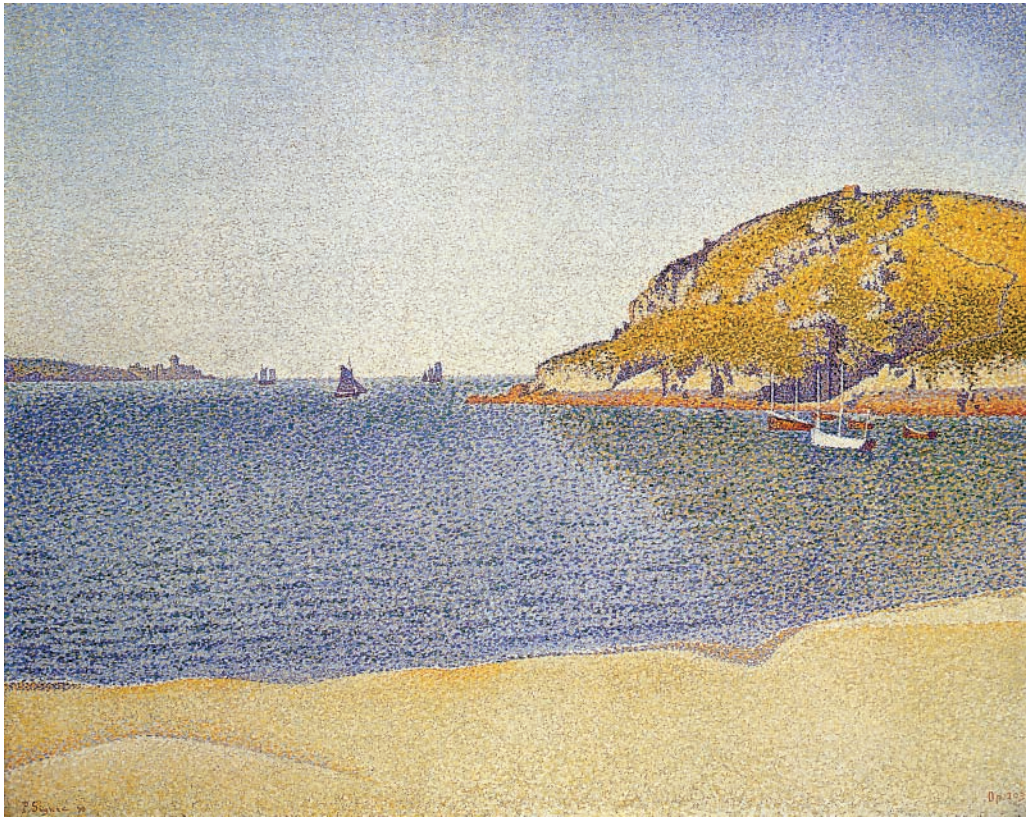
for him. He took fleeting sets of complements from nature and wanted to understand the laws which governed them. He set himself to studying the scientific theory of colour, the reactions of successive and simultaneous contrasts. And, benefitting from these studies, he objectified contrasts on his canvasses and used optical blending.

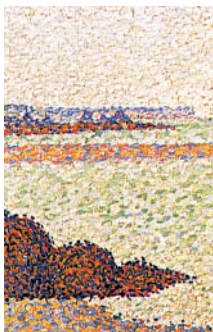
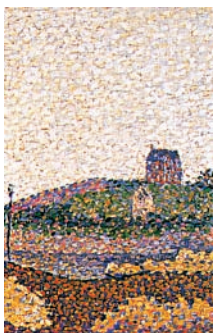
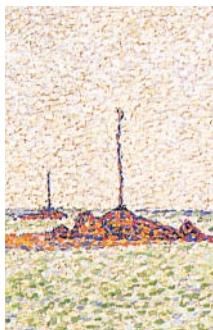
Thus making profit of all, annexing the discoveries of some, the methods of another, these acquisitions, far from diminishing his individuality, gave him an increasing vigour.

Port of Saint-Cast. Opus 209

1890

Oil on canvas, 66 x 82 cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston





Delacroix had at his disposition the richest chromatic repertoire than any other artist ever had.

What a long way he came since his first painting, *The Barque of Dante*, in which the colour appears to be rational and almost dull, but which first appeared to be a revolutionary audacity! Thiers, one of the only critics who had defended this painting when it was shown to the Salon in 1822, could not help finding it “a bit raw”.

The Massacre at Chios was envisaged with the impression of Gros’ *The Plague Victims of Jaffa* in mind,

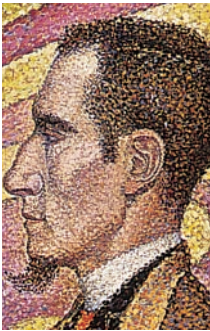
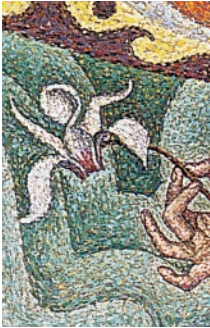
Saint-Briac. Beacons. Opus 210

1890

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm

Mr and Mrs Donald B. Marron Collection, New York





and which benefitted from the influence of Constable's colours. This is an example of great progress, and so categorically marks Delacroix's final split with all official convention and academic method, which caused his advocates to abandon him in the very first hour. Gérard declared: "This is a man who is jumping without a parachute." Thiers was alarmed and reprimanded such audacity, whilst Gros was of the opinion that: "The *Massacre at Chios* is a massacre of painting."

Opus 217. Against the Enamel of a Background
Rhythmic with Beats and Angles, Tones and Tints,
Portrait of M. Félix Fénéon in 1890

1890

Oil on canvas, 73.5 x 92.5 cm
The Museum of Modern Art, New York





This knowledge of the scientific theory of colour served him, first of all, to harmonise or extol two neighbouring hues through contrast in order to settle the beneficial meeting of shade and tone, by the agreement of similarities or the analogy of contrasts. Secondly, this knowledge enabled his advancement in continuing his observations of colour interplay, bringing him to use optical blending which, excluding all flat shades, was judged by others to be detrimental. From that moment on, he made sure to maintain a uniform colour on his canvasses:

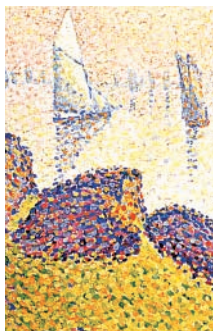
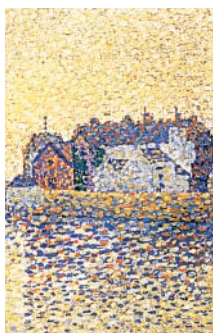
Concarneau. Calm Morning. Opus 219 (Larghetto)

1891

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm

Private collection





he made hues sing by overlapping them with dabs of different shades of the same colour. After having thus roused colour shades through vibration and small intervals of tone degradation, he created, by contrasting two remote colours, a third shade which was the result of their optical blending. He created his rarest colours by this ingenious method, not by mixing them on the palette. He knows that complementary colours can lift each other if they are opposed, and can destroy each other if they are mixed.

Evening Calm, Concarneau, Opus 220
(Allegro Maestoso)

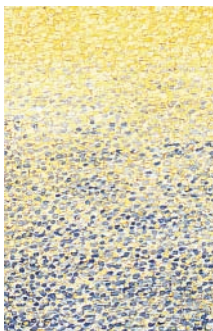
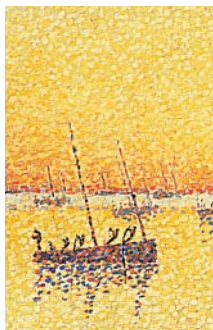
1891

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm

Robert Lehman Collection

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



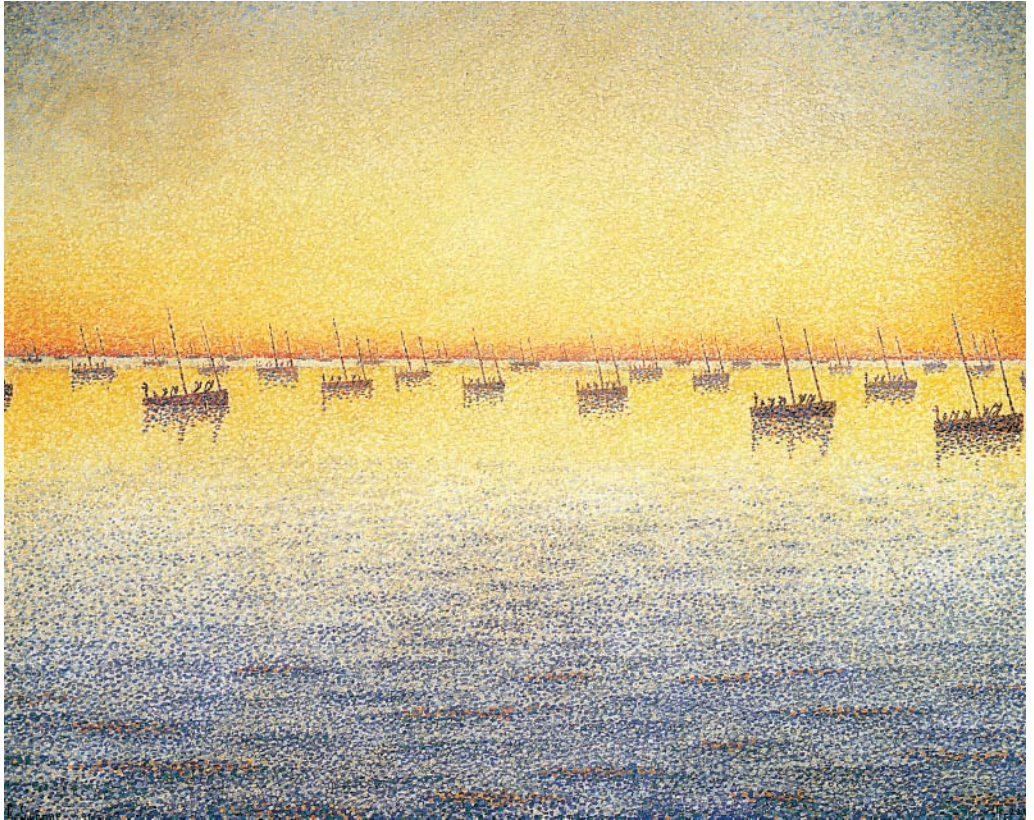


This science of colour which allowed him to thus harmonise even the least detail in a painting, by embellishing every surface, also helped him to regulate the chromatic composition to obtain precise harmony, by definite rules. Wielding this science at the discretion of his inspiration, he decided which combination will dominate a particular colour, according to which subject was being depicted. The drama which he created, the poetry that he wanted to sing, was always through a suitable matching colour. This eloquence of colour and lyricism of harmony: these are the

Setting Sun. Sardine Fishing. Opus 221 (Adagio)

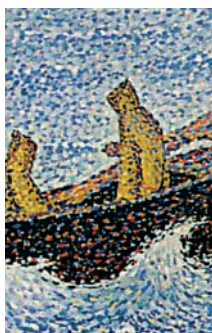
1891

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm
Museum of Modern Art, New York

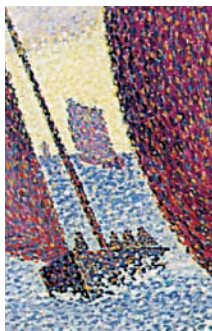




great strengths of Delacroix's genius. Thanks to this understanding of the aesthetic character of colour, he could, with great sureness and magnitude, express his dreams and alternately paint triumph, drama, intimacy, and sorrow.



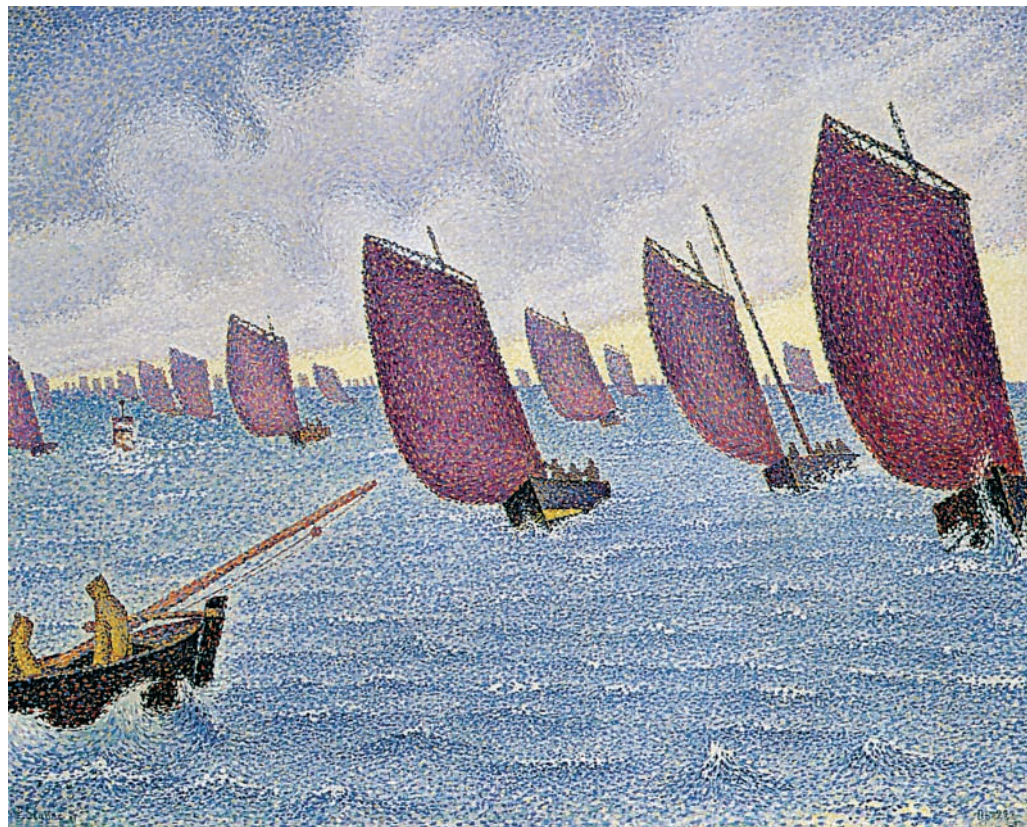
In *The Women of Algiers*, the artist did not wish to express a single emotion, but simply, a peaceful and contemplative life in a sumptuous interior; there is therefore no dominant element, no key colour. All the warm and gay colours are balanced with their cold and



Concarneau. Return of the Ships. Opus 222
(Presto Finale)

1891

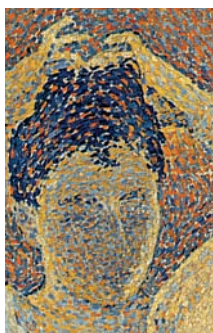
Oil in canvas, 66 x 82 cm
Private collection





gentle complements in a decorative symphony, from where a marvellous impression of a peaceful and delightful harem emerges.

However, Delacroix had not yet achieved all the brilliance and harmony which he was sure to one day master. If we continue the attentive examination of *The Women of Algiers*, which we took as an example of the application of his scientific method, we could state that it is missing the perfect unity of variety which would characterise his final works.



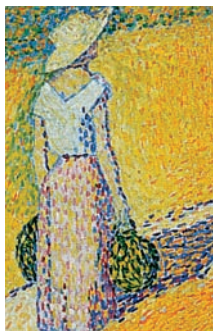
Woman Combing her Hair. Opus 227

1892

Encaustic on strengthened canvas, 50 x 70 cm

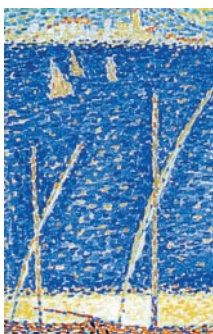
Private collection





Whilst the backgrounds, costumes, and accessories vibrate with an intense and melodious brilliance, the bodies of the figures, by comparison, seem flat and a little dull and poor in accordance with the rest.

If the setting shines brighter than jewels, it is because Delacroix made every surface of drapery, doors, carpets, and ceramics shimmer by introducing a quantity of minute details and small ornaments to them. Of these, multiple colours came together to either calm or energise these segments of the paintings. It was only later that he



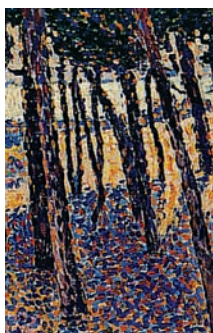
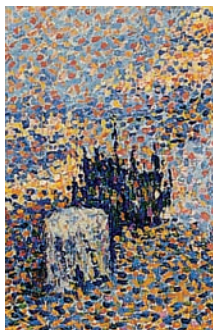
Women at the Well

1892

Oil on canvas, 194.5 x 130 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris





would know how to conquer cold precision and not fear to enhance the artificial shading of the flesh colours to obtain more brightness and light.

The treasures of his palette were never exhausted. He began to emerge, little by little, from the chiaroscuro of his first works. A more powerful Chromatism was spreading across the entire surface of his canvasses, and his colour appeared to become immaterial. Through the use of optical blending, he created shades of colour which were generators of light. If a little more clarity in the Galerie

Sunset on the City. Saint-Tropez. Opus 233

1892

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm

Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Miyazaki (Japan)



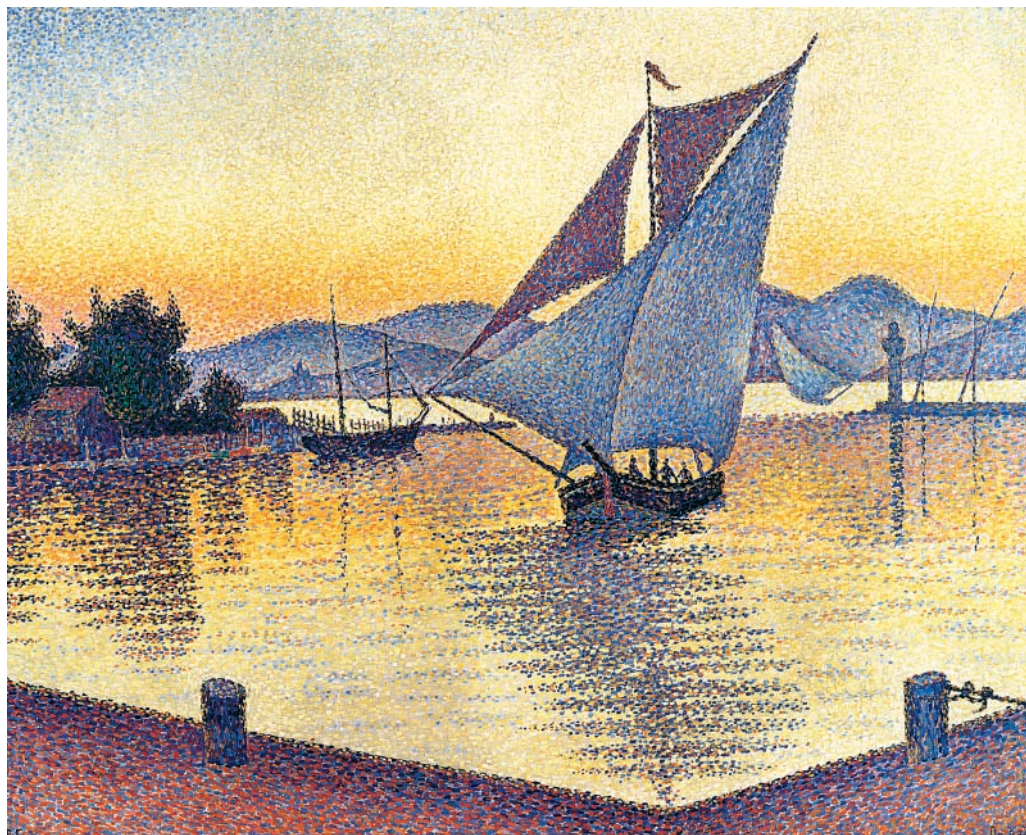


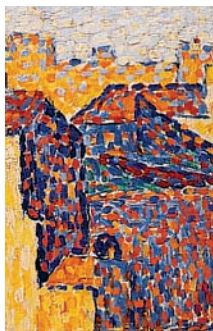
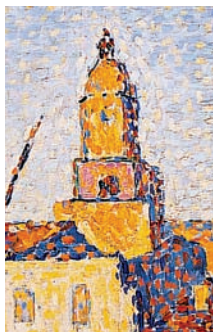
d'Apollon or a little less fearful caution in the Senate and Chamber permitted the close study of Delacroix's decorations, one could easily say that the freshest and most delicate colour shades of skin tone were produced by great green and pink contrasted shading and that the luminous brilliance of the skies was obtained by similar methods. From a distance, these shades disappear, but the colour which results from their optical mixing is revealed to be striking, whilst, viewed from the same distance, a flat shade would disappear or weaken.

The Port and Sunset. Saint-Tropez. Opus 236

1892

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm
Private collection, London





Delacroix finally achieved his crowning work: the decoration of The Chapel of the Holy Angels in the Saint-Sulpice. All progress achieved over forty years of effort and struggle can be summarised here. He was also completely freed from dark preparations and bitumen bases which obscure some of his works and which now are reappearing; cracking and deteriorating. For the decoration of this chapel he only painted with the simplest and purest colours; he definitively renounced subordinating his colour for chiaroscuro; light is widespread throughout: not a single black circle, not a single dark spot,

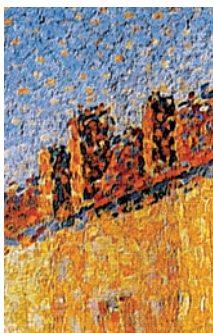
Houses on the Harbour. Saint-Tropez. Opus 237

1892

Oil on canvas, 46.5 x 55.3 cm

Collection of Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr





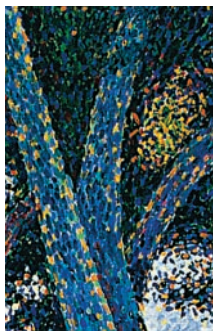
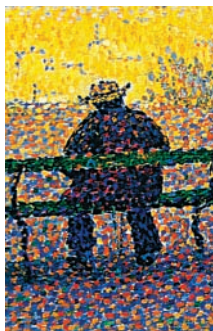
in disharmony with other parts of the painting, no more opaque shadows, and no more flat shades. He created his shades from all of the elements which should enhance and enliven them without fear of imitating natural appearances or colouring. Colour for colour, with no other pretext! Every local colour is pushed to its maximum intensity, but always in agreement with its neighbour, which it both influences and is influenced by. Everything fuses with shadow and light, in a harmonious ensemble and coloured in perfect balance where nothing is out of place. Delacroix had finally achieved unity in

Sailing Boats in Saint-Tropez Harbour

1893

Oil on canvas, 56 x 46.5 cm
Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal





complexity and brightness in harmony, which he strived all his life to find.

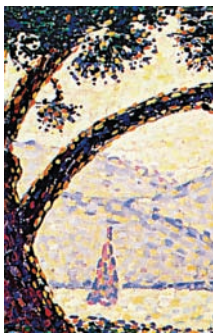
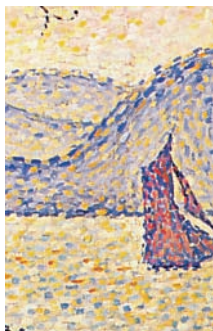
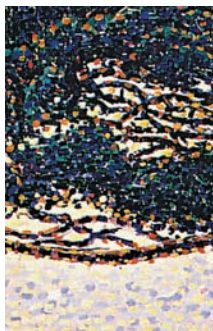
For over half a century therefore, Delacroix endeavoured to achieve more brilliance and light, thereby showing the Colourists, who would succeed him, the method to follow and the goal to reach. He still left much for them to do, but, thanks to his contribution and teaching, their task would be much-simplified. He proved to them all the advantages of a learned, combined, and logical technique, which did not hinder the passion of the artist in any way, but fortified it. He delivered the

Place des Lices, Saint-Tropez

1893

Oil on canvas, 65 x 82 cm
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh





secret of the laws governing colour: the agreement of similarities, the analogy of opposites. He demonstrated to them how much a unified and flat colour is inferior to the shade produced by the vibrations of diverse combined elements. He assured them of the resources of optical blending, permitting the creation of new colour shades, and advised them to banish as many dark, dirty, and dull colours as possible. He signalled to them the virtuous influence of colour which helped to contribute a painting's overall effect; he initiated them to the aesthetic language of shades and tones, inciting them to dare

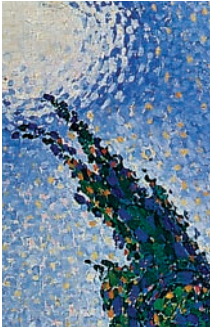
The Bonadventure Pine. Opus 239

1893

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm

The John A. and Audrey Jones Beck Collection
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

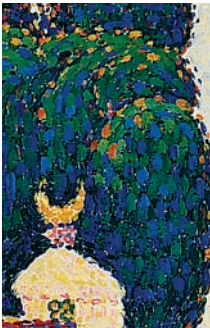




everything, and never to fear that their harmonies would be too colourful.

This creative master is equally a great educator: his teaching is as precious as his works.

It must be remembered that Delacroix's paintings, despite his efforts and science, are less luminous and less coloured than the paintings of the artists who followed his lead. *The Crusaders Entering Constantinople* appears dark when compared to Renoir's *Luncheon of the Boating Party* and Seurat's *Circus*. Delacroix drew from the Romantic palette all that it could give, overlapping colours;

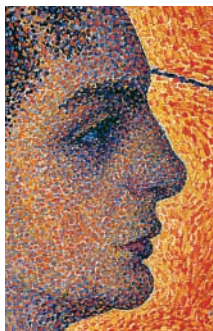


Two Cypresses. Opus 241 (Mistal)

1893

Oil on canvas, 80 x 64 cm
Museum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo





some brilliant, some, in too large numbers, earthy and dark. The only thing missing for Delacroix to better serve his ideal was a more perfect tool.

Everything is connected and comes in its own time: it is first complicated, and then later simplified. If the Impressionists simplified the palette, if they had obtained more colour and luminosity, it is to the research of the Romantic master, to his struggles with a complicated palette, that this is due.

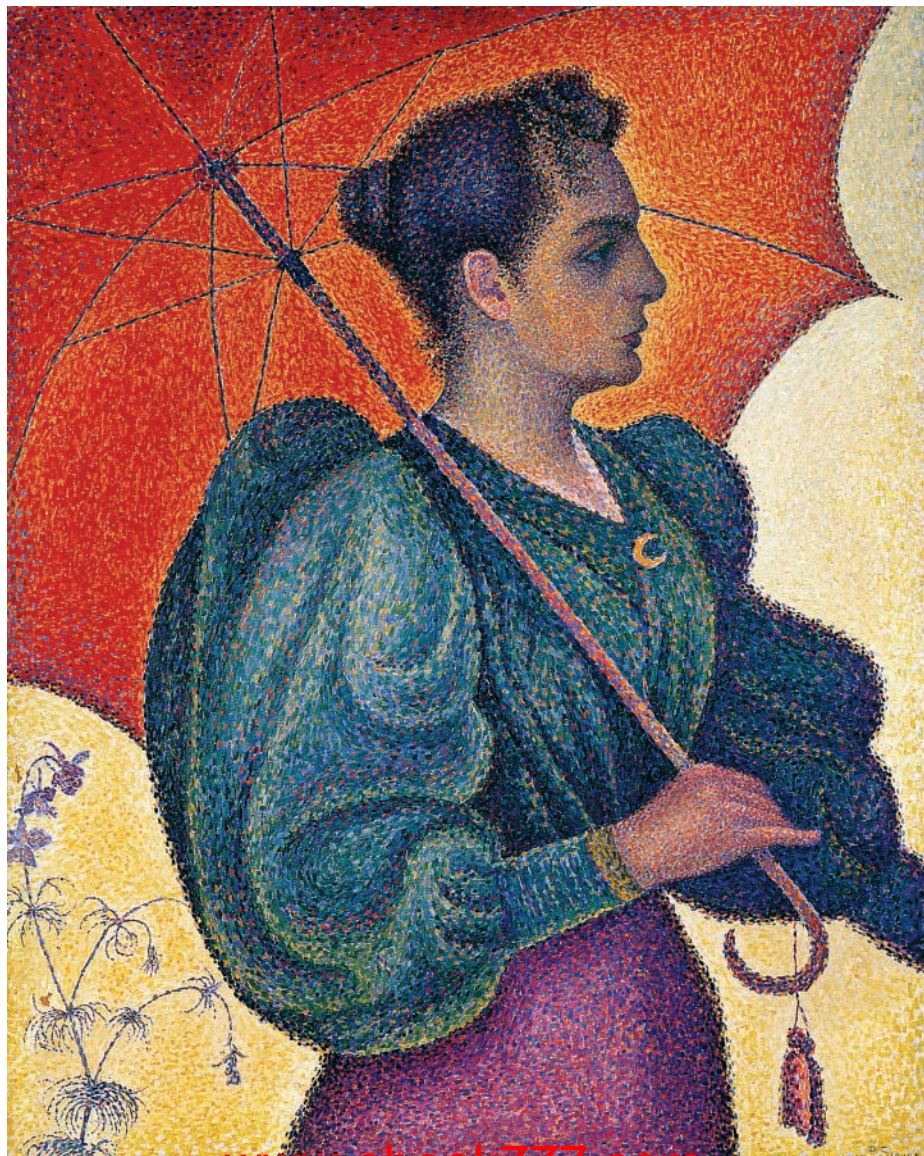
A sentence attributed to Delacroix formulates his efforts well: "Give me the mud of the street," he declared,

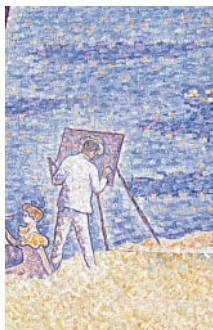
Woman with a Parasol

1893

Oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris





“and I will give you the body of a woman in a delightful colour shade,” meaning that, in contrast with other intense colours, he would modify this mud and colour it at his discretion.

This is indeed, effectively, the summary of his technique; he strived to enhance dull preparations by the colour of pure elements; he strived to make light with muddy colours. Rather than embellish this mud, he repudiated it!

But behold the other artists who have made new steps towards the light and only paint with the colours of the rainbow.



Age of Harmony

1893-1895

Oil on canvas, 300 x 400 cm

Gift of Mrs Paul Signac, Mairie de Montreuil

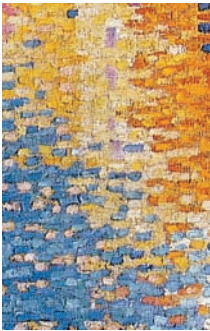




THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE IMPRESSIONISTS

Those who succeeded Delacroix would be the champions of light and colour; those who later would be called the Impressionists: Renoir, Monet, Pissarro, Guillaumin, Sisley, Cézanne, and their admirable precursor, Jongkind.

At this time, those who were to become the Impressionists were influenced by Courbet and Corot. Apart from Renoir, that is, who instead followed Delacroix, from whose work he made copies and interpretations. He still painted in great patches, flat and simple, and seemed to search for white, black, and grey,

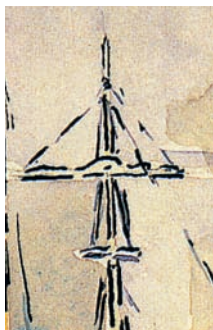


The Red Buoy

1895

Oil on canvas, 81.2 x 65 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris





rather than pure and vibrant colours. Whereas Fantin-Latour, an artist who painted in tribute to Delacroix and many other serious or serene works, already drew and painted with tones and shades; if not intense, then at least degraded and separated.

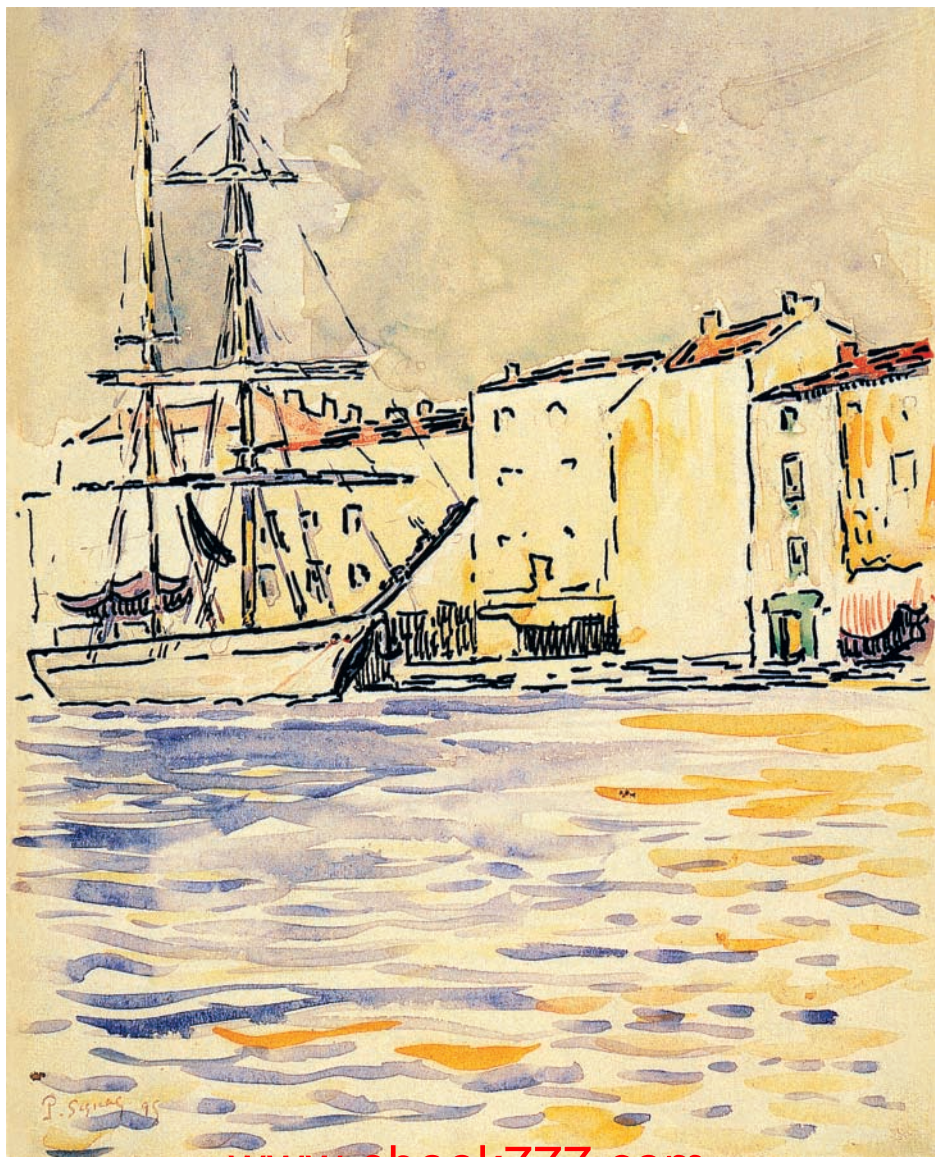
However, in 1871, during a long stay in London, Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro discovered Turner. They marvelled at the prestige and the enchantment of his use of colour: they studied his works, and analysed his craft. They were first of all struck by his effects of snow and ice and were astonished by the way in which he had succeeded in giving the sensation of the whiteness of snow,

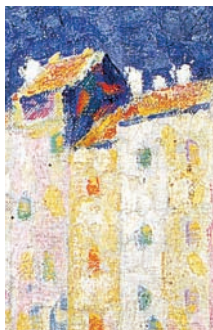


Le Brick

1895

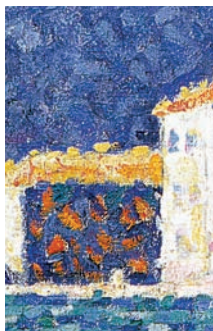
Watercolor on graphite recovery with black ink, 27 x 21 cm
Musée de la Marine, Paris





they who up until then could not reach the white of silver with their large patches of colour laid out flat, painted in large brushstrokes.

After his return from France, and preoccupied by their discovery, Monet and Pissarro rejoined Jongkind who was in full possession of his effective craft, which allowed him to interpret the most fleeting and subtle colours of light. They noted the similarity between his methods and those of Turner. The Impressionists were thus brought, by the undeniable influence that Turner and Jongkind had on them, to Delacroix's technique.



Storm in Saint-Tropez

1895

Oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm
Musée de l'Annociade, Saint-Tropez





This, they deviated from to look for Pointillism through contrast between black and white. Since the Pointillism of the Impressionists, is it not that the shading of the large decorations by Delacroix has been reduced to the proportion of small formatted canvasses which compel direct work from nature? This is much the same process that one and all used to achieve the same goal: light and colour.

But, whilst Delacroix had a complicated palette to hand, comprised of both pure and earth colours, the Impressionists were using a simplified palette comprised

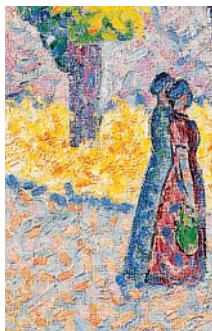
Saint-Tropez. Lighthouse

1895

Oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm

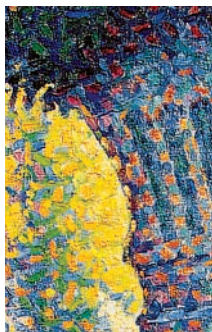
Private collection





of seven or eight of the brightest colours which are the closest to the solar spectrum.

From 1874, Monet, Pissarro, and Renoir (it is of little importance who was the first) were only employing yellow, orange, vermillion, shellac, red, purple, blue, and intense greens such as viridian and emerald.



This simplification of the palette, only putting a small colour range to use, led them inevitably to break down the colour shades and multiply the elements. They did their best to reconstruct colourings by the optical mixing of innumerable multicoloured dots, which were juxtaposed, crossed, and intertwined.

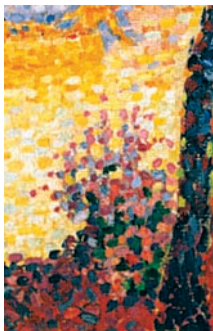
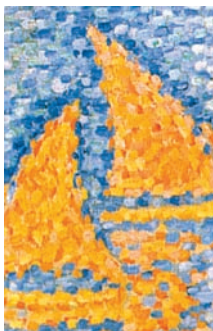


Saint-Tropez, fontaine des Lices

1895

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm
Diane Collection, Fribourg





Benefitting from these new resources, the breaking down of colour hues and the exclusive use of intense colours, they could paint landscapes of the Île de France or of Normandy with more brilliance and with more luminosity than the Oriental scenes favoured by Delacroix. For the first time, truly illuminated landscapes and figures could be admired.

They conjured so much brightness and luminosity that they never failed to shock the public and the majority of other artists who were so resistant to the splendours and

Sails and Pines

1896

Oil on canvas, 81 x 52 cm

Private collection





charms of colour. We can send their canvasses to the official Salons and, when they show themselves in low mezzanines or dark stalls, we may mock them in turn.

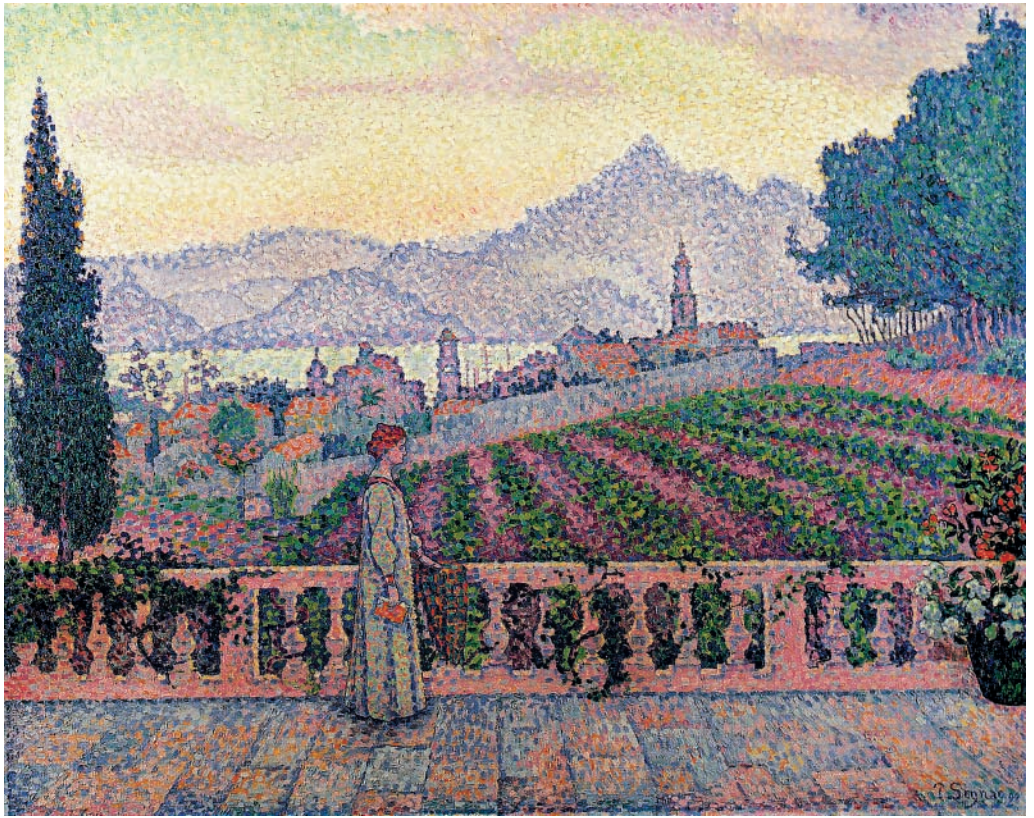
However, they influenced Édouard Manet to the point where he became enamoured with dots, with the contrast between black and white, rather than Chromatism. His canvasses suddenly became clearer and brightened. Henceforth, he would put his authority and genius to the service of their cause and fight, in the official Salons, the struggle which the Impressionists were upholding in their independent exhibitions, both collective and independent.

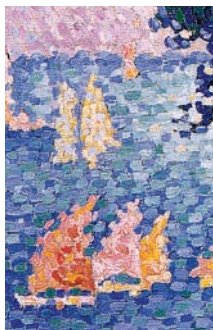


Saint-Tropez. The Terrace

1895

Oil on canvas, 72.5 x 91.5 cm
National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin

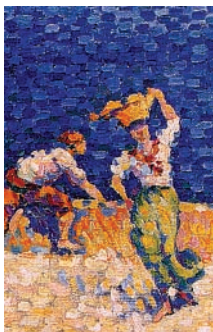




Over twenty years the struggle continued; but little by little, palettes became cleaner and the Salons brightened to the idea of simplified colours. The Prix de Rome artists were crafty but incompetent, trying in vain to steal and imitate the innovative style.



The Impressionists certainly characterised one of the eras of art history, not only by the majestic creations of these painters of life, movement, joy, and sun, but also by the considerable influence which they had on every contemporary painter; they who modernised colour.

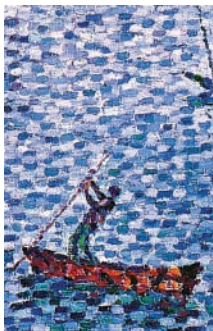
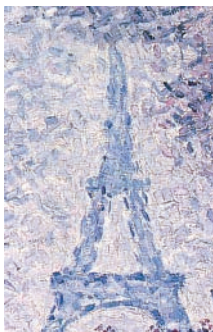
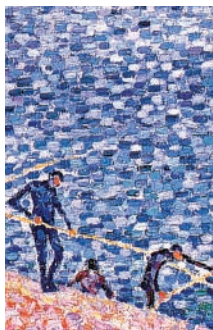


Cape Noli

1898

Oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne





However, they did not take all possible advantages from their luminous and simplified palettes. What the Impressionists did was to only allow pure colours onto their palettes: what they did not do, and what was left for those to come after, was to respect absolutely, in all circumstances, the purity of these pure colours. By mixing the pure elements which they used, they reconstructed the precise earthy and dark colours which they seemed to want to eliminate.

Grenelle Bridge

1899

Oil on canvas, 62 x 78.5 cm

Sigur Grosterus Collection

Amos Andersonin Taideomuseo, Helsinki





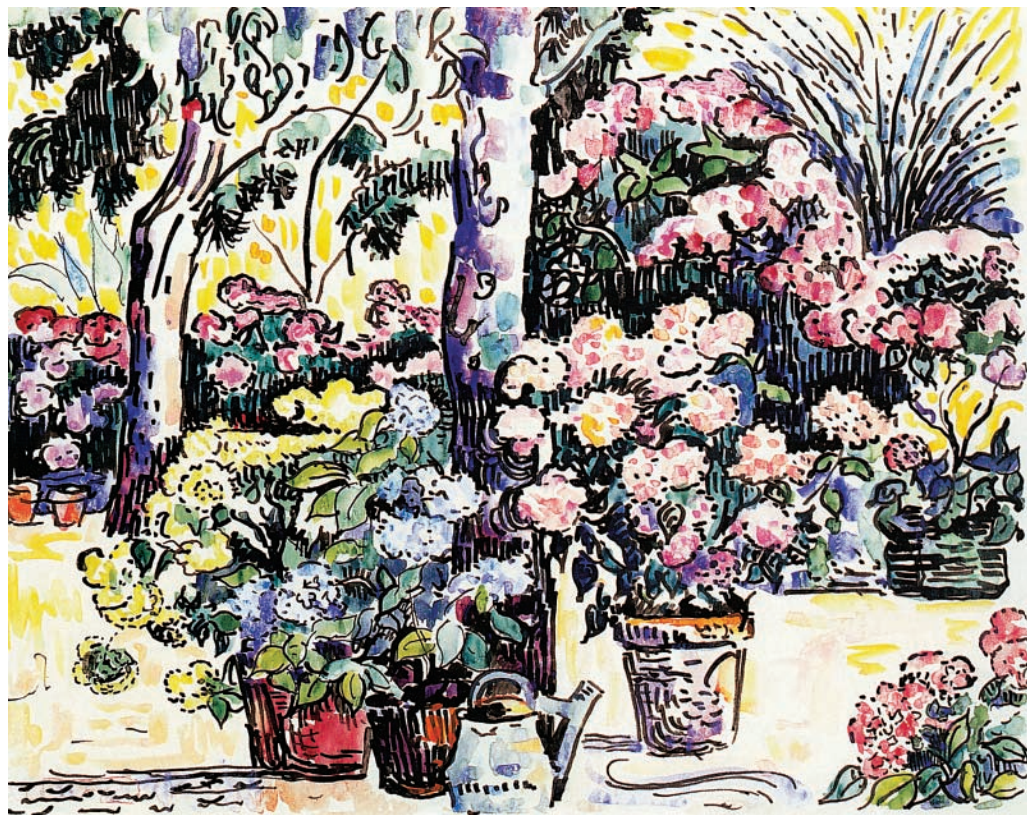
Their pure colours, not only disrupted by the blending on the palette, but also diminished colour intensity by letting opposite elements meet on the canvas, with haphazard brushstrokes. In the haste of their joyful creation, a brushstroke of orange clashed with a stroke of fresh blue paint, a slash of green met with a still-wet red, a purple brushed against a yellow, and these mixes were repeated with harsh particles spread across the non-optical or fine grey canvas. This gave a dull and pigmented appearance, which singularly reduced the brilliance of their paintings.

Saint-Tropez. The Artist's Garden

c. 1900

Watercolour and ink, 32.4 x 43 cm

Private collection





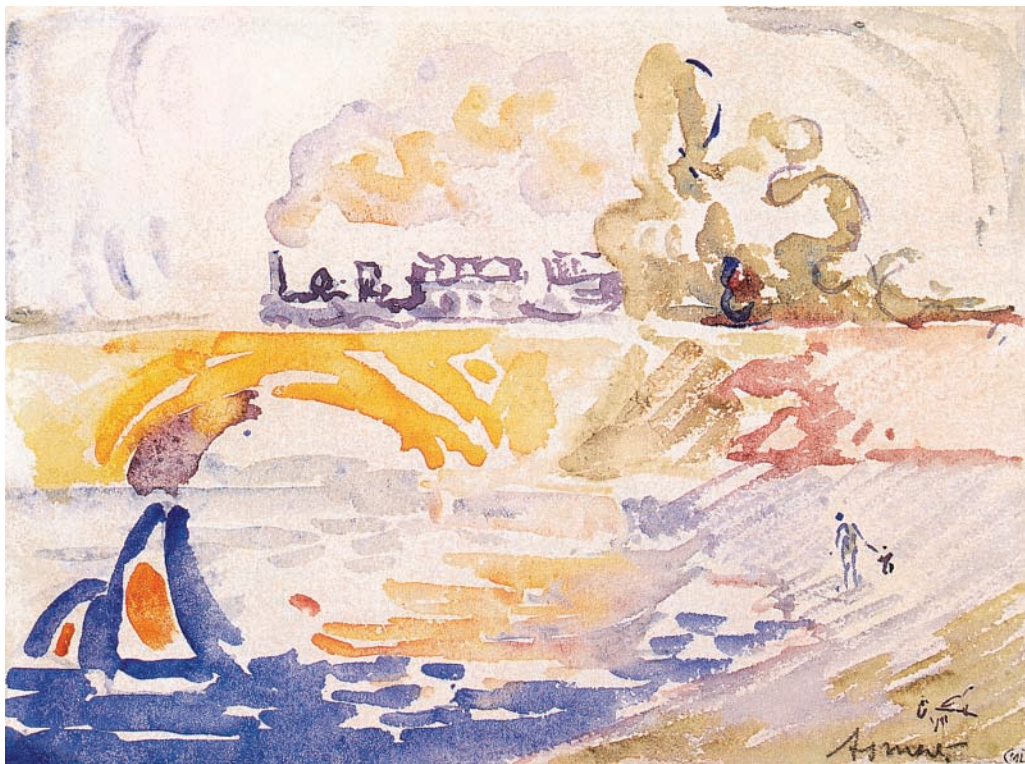
Of the remainder, the illustrated examples tended to prove that, for these painters, the mixed hues were not without charm, nor the tones without voice or interest. In certain canvasses of his admirable series of the *Cathedrals*, was not Claude Monet ingenious to fuse together all the gems of his dazzling palette to search out the colour shades, materially exact, which were so grey and so disturbed, of the tarnished, old, and mouldy walls?

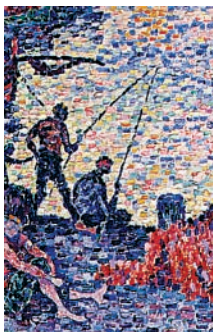
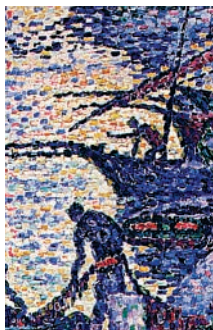
In Camille Pissarro's latter paintings, the very least particle of pure colour cannot be found. Particularly in his *Boulevards* of 1897-1898, this great painter strove to

The Asnières Viaduct

c. 1900

Watercolour and grease pencil, 16 x 21.5 cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris





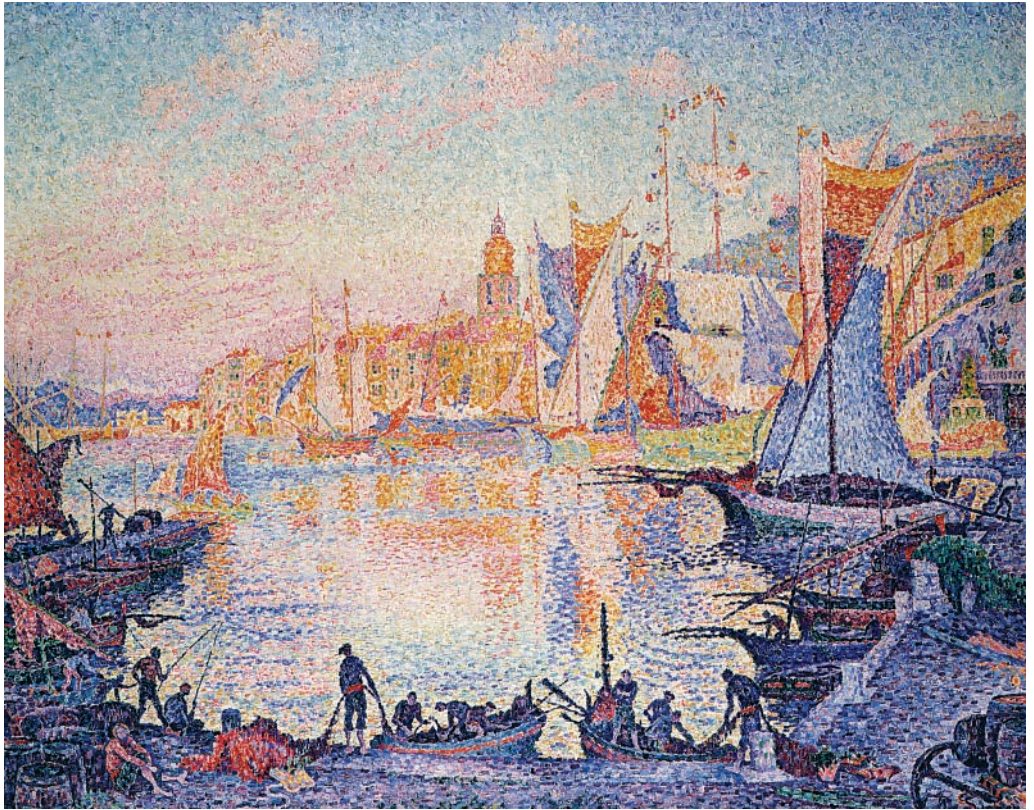
reconstruct the gloomy and feeble shades of the muddy streets, the disintegration of houses, chimney soot, blackened trees, leaden roofs, and sodden crowds, which he wanted to represent in their sad reality. He did this with complex blends of blue, green, yellow, orange, red, and purple. Delacroix tried to create light with extinguished colours whilst the Impressionists, who by the right of conquest, had light on their palettes, and extinguished it voluntarily.

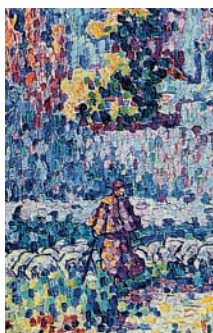
In their canvasses, some contrasts can be observed whilst some are omitted: one reaction may be accurate,

Saint-Tropez

1901-1902

Oil on canvas, 1310 x 161.5 cm
National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo



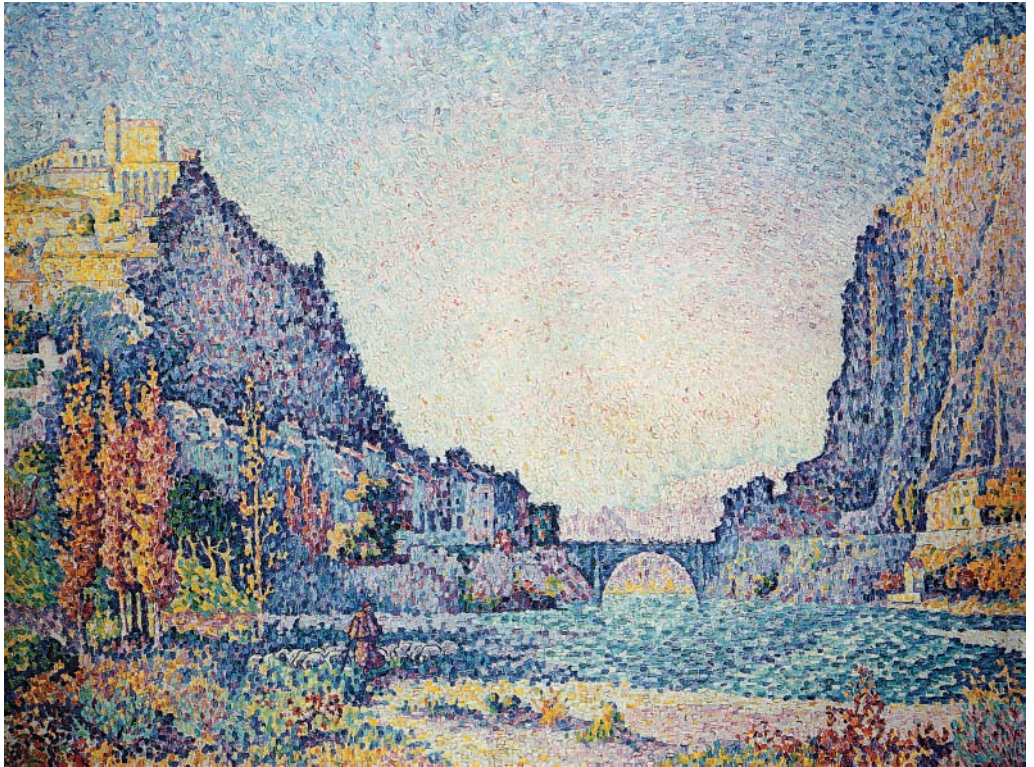


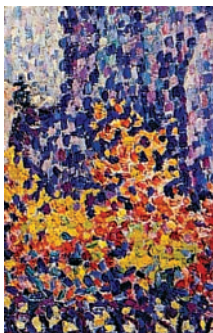
and another may be dubious. An example will show how much uncontrolled emotion can be deceiving. Visualise the Impressionist in the process of painting a natural landscape; he has before him grass or green trees, parts of which are in the sunshine, others are in the shade. In the green of the shadows closest to the spaces of light, the painter's scrutinising eye tests a fleeting emotion of red. Satisfied by having spotted this colour, the Impressionist hastens to place a stroke of red on his canvas. But, in his haste to capture this sensation, he has hardly any time to control the accuracy of this red which, by a random stroke

Sisterone

1902

Oil on canvas, 89 x 117 cm
Simone and alan Hartman Collection





of the brush, may be expressed by an orange, a vermillion, shellac ... even by a purple.

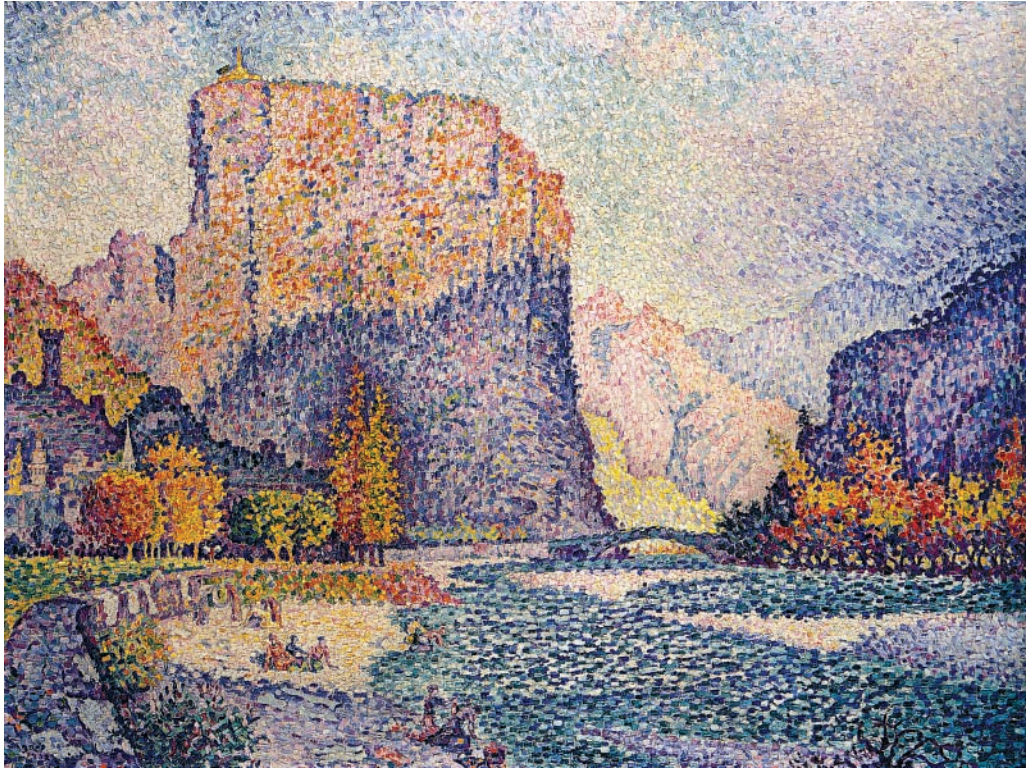
The absence of any method meant that the Impressionist would often make a mistake in the application of contrasts. If the artist is well versed or the contrasts are very obvious, the sense, clearly felt, will find its exact formula; but in less favourable circumstances, seen in a vague state, will remain unexpressed or depicted in an imprecise fashion. The Impressionists showed the same arbitrariness in the fragmentation of their colours. Their vision strove for a beautiful spectacle but it does not appear that their guiding ideas served this purpose.

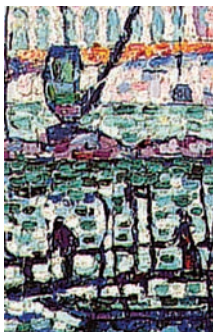
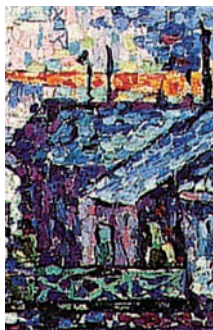
Castellane

1902-1903

Oil on canvas, 89 x 116 cm

Private collection



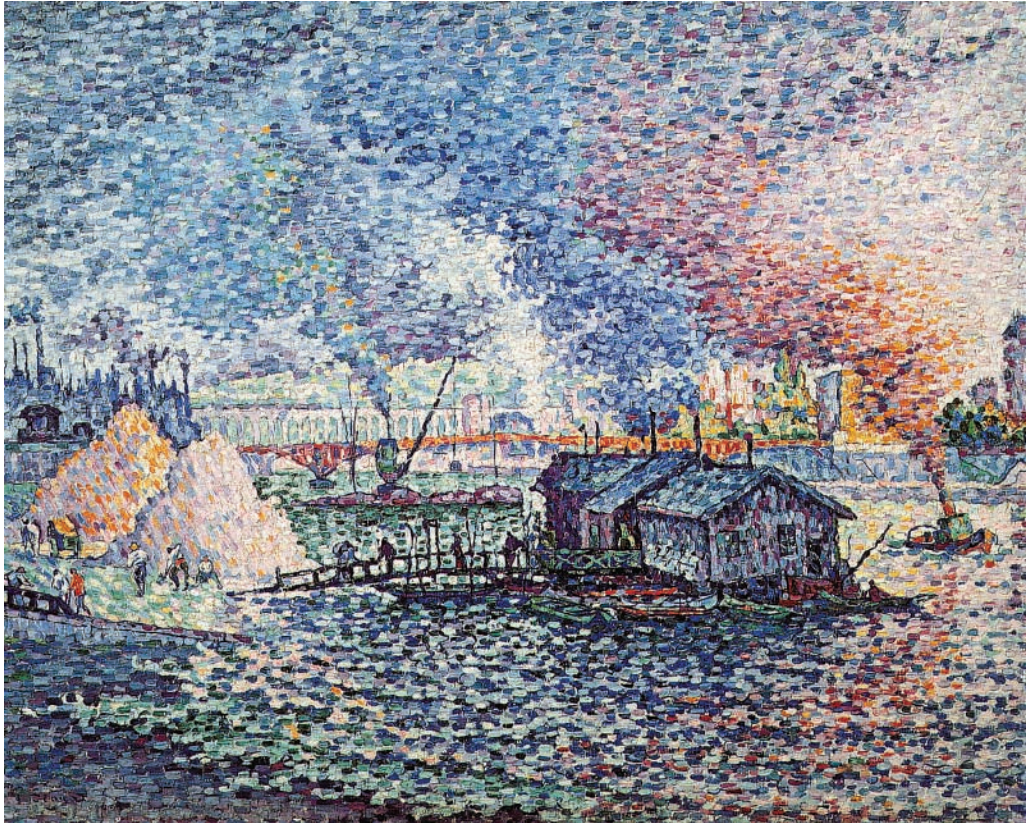


In the absence of these, and so as not to be deprived of a single opportunity, they let their canvasses sample the entire palette, and placed a little of everything ubiquitously. In this polychromatic hubbub, it was the antagonistic elements which neutralised by tarnishing the entire painting. Shadow and light, in great contrast, were added from the blue to orange of light and from orange to blue of shadow, thereby befuddling the two shades which they wanted to energise through contrasts. Thereby, they reduced the contrasting effect which they seemed to be seeking.

Mirabeau Bridge

1903

Oil on canvas, 66 x 82 cm
Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, Tel-Aviv





THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE NEO-IMPRESSIONISTS

It was in 1886, during the last of the exhibitions of the Impressionist group, that works painted with a reasoned method, uniquely with pure, balanced, and optically blended shades, appeared for the first time.

Georges Seurat, who was the instigator of this progress, here showed the first Divisionist painting; a decisive canvas which also testified to the rarest qualities of painting: *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*. Grouped around him, Camille Pissarro, his son Lucien Pissarro, and Paul Signac also exhibited canvasses painted according to a somewhat similar technique.

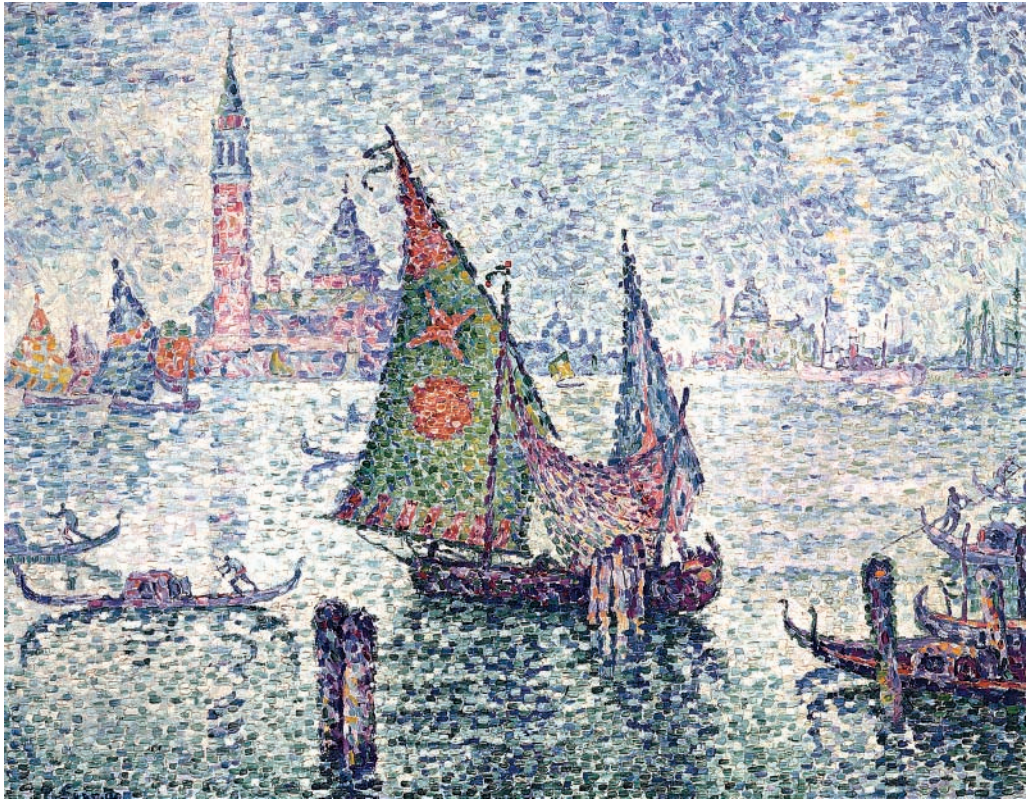


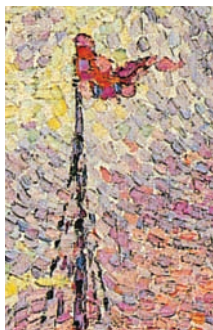
The Green Sail (Venice)

1904

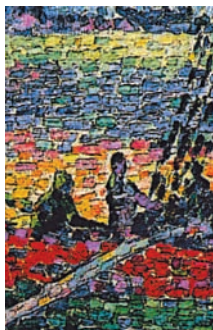
Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

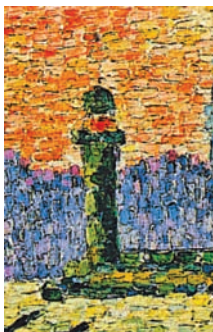




If these painters, who best fit the epithet Chromo-Luminarists, adopted the name of Neo-Impressionists, it was not to toady success (the Impressionists were still in full control), but to give homage to the effort of their precursors and to mark, under diverging methods, the common goal of light and colour.



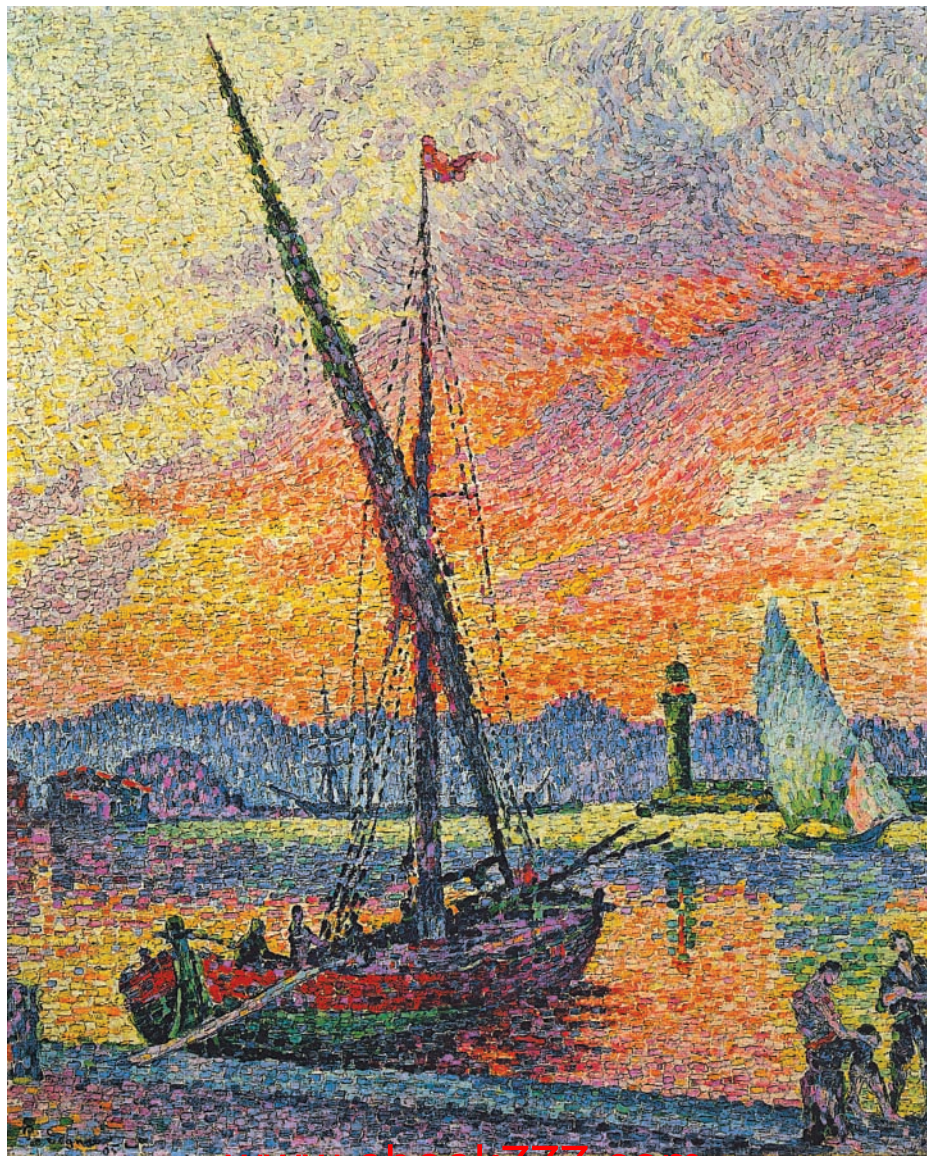
The Neo-Impressionists, like the Impressionists, only used pure colours on their palettes. But, they absolutely refuted all mixing on the palette except, naturally, the blending of adjacent colours in the chromatic circle. These, in decreasing gradients and encircled with white, tend to return to the variety of the shades of the solar

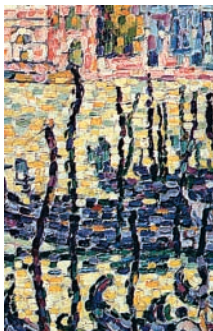


The Fishing Boat (Saint-Tropez)

1905

Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm
Galerie de la Résidence, Paris





spectrum and all its shades. Orange mixes with yellow and red, purple degrades towards red and blue, green passes from blue to yellow; these, along with white, are the only elements which they used. But, through optical blending of these few pure colours, by varying their proportions, they achieved an infinite quantity of hues, from the most intense to the drabbest.

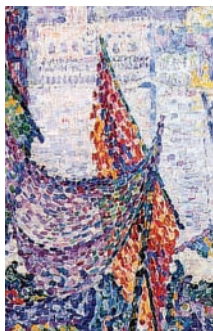
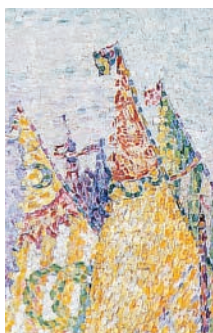
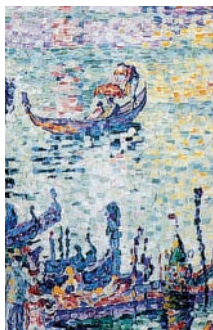
Not only did they eliminate from their palettes all mixes of confused colour, but they also avoided sully the purity of their colours through the meeting of opposing elements in the base layers. Every brushstroke was

Grand Canal (Venice)

1905

Oil on canvas, 73.5 x 92 cm
The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo





taken from the purity of the palette, and stayed pure on the canvas.

It was in this way, and the manner in which they used colours prepared with more brilliant powders and more sumptuous materials, that they could surpass the luminosity and colouring of the Impressionists, who tarnished and dulled the pure colours of the simplified palette.

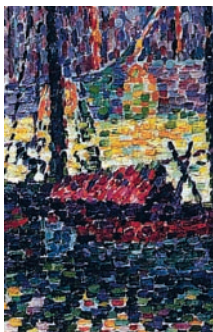
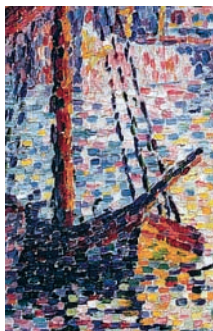
It seems that, once before a white canvas, an artist's first preoccupation should be: to decide which curves and which arabesques will break up the surface and which shades and tones will cover it. This was a rare

Venice. Basin of Saint-Marc

1905

Oil on canvas, 130 x 163 cm
Chrysler Museum, Norfolk (Virginia)





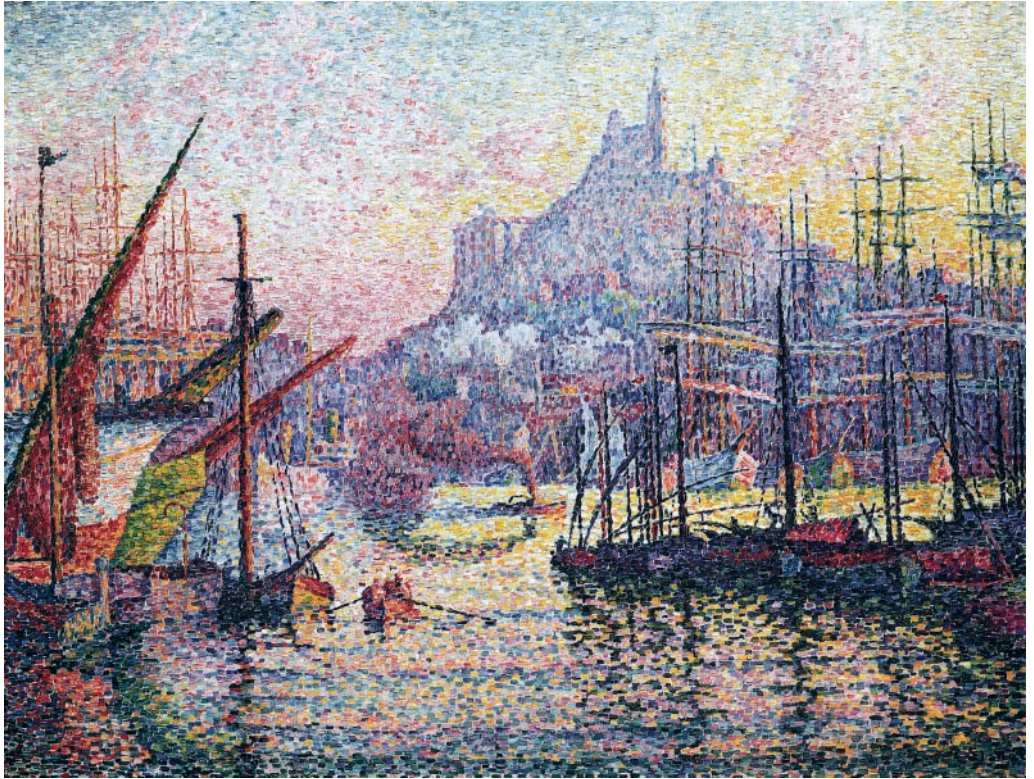
worry of a time when the majority of painting techniques were to replicate instant photography or vain illustrations.

To reproach the Impressionists for having neglected these concerns would be puerile, since their purpose was clearly to understand the arrangements and harmonies of nature, as they present themselves, without any concern for order or combination. The Neo-Impressionist, following Delacroix's advice, will not start a canvas without having determined the arrangement. Guided by tradition and by science, he will harmonise the composition at the outset, that is to say, he will adapt lines

The Lighthouse at Biarritz

1906

Watercolour and grease pencil, 16.3 x 21.5 cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris





(directions and angles), chiaroscuro (tones), and colour (shades) to suit the character that he wants to see prevail. The dominant line will be horizontal for calm, ascending for joy, and descending for sadness, with all intermediary lines to depict all other emotions in their infinite variety. A polychromatic colour, no less expressive or diverse, combines with this linear pattern: warm shades and clear tones combine with ascending lines; predominantly cold shades and dark tones attach to descending lines; and a more or less perfect balance of cold and warm shades

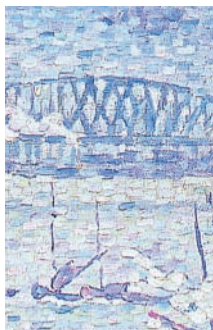
Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde
(La Bonne-Mère), Marseilles

1905-1906

Oil on canvas, 88.9 x 116.2 cm

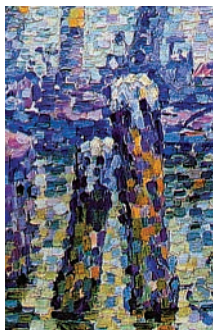
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





and light and intense tones are added to the calm of a horizontal line. Thereby submitting colour and line to the emotion that he felt and wanted to depict, the painter becomes a poet, a creator.

In a general way, we can admit that Neo-Impressionist work is more harmonious than that of the Impressionists, since, first, thanks to the constant observation of contrast, the harmony of details is more precise. Furthermore, thanks to the reasoned composition and aesthetic language of colours, they convey a harmonious ensemble and an accurate harmony.

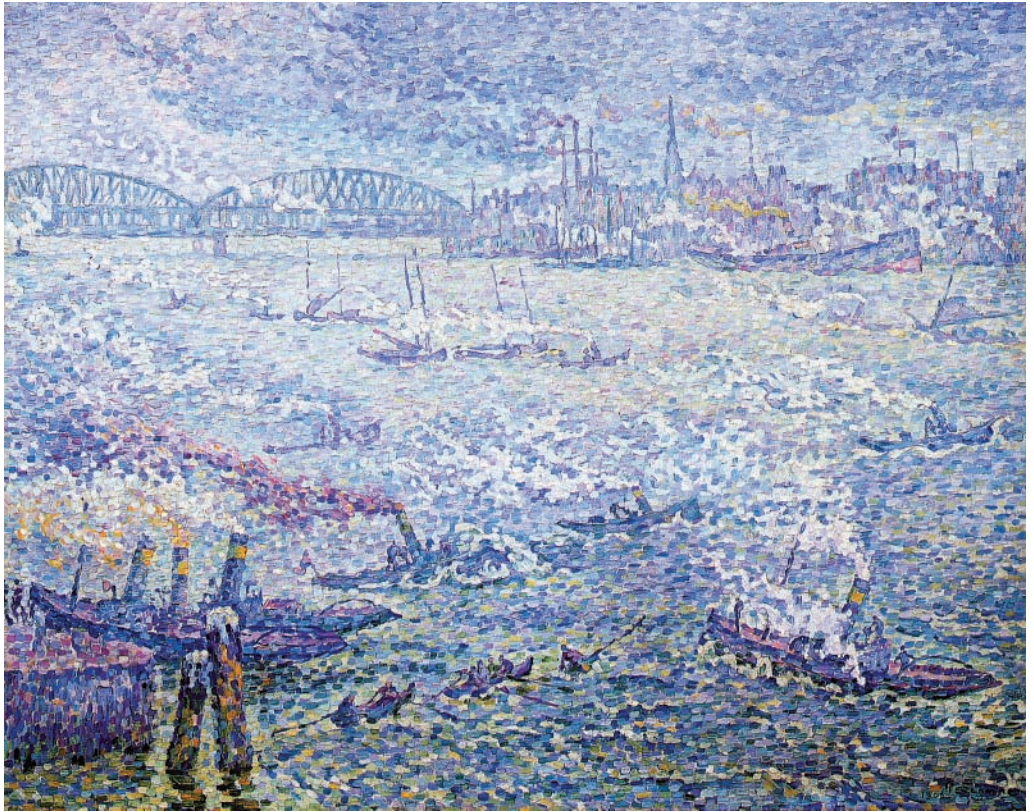


Rotterdam. Steamships

1906

Oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm

Shimane Art Museum, Shimane (Japan)





Neo-Impressionism, which characterises this research of integral purity and complete harmony, is the logical expansion of Impressionism. Those adept of this new technique only reunited, arranged, and developed the research of their precursors. Does the example of Camille Pissarro, adopting the process of the Neo-Impressionists in 1886, and illustrating his beautiful renaming of the new-born group, not show the link which unites them to the previous generation of Colourists? Without it being possible to note the abrupt change in his works, little by little, the grey mixes disappeared, reactions were noted,

Tugboats in Rotterdam

1906

Watercolour on light pencil sketch, 22.5 x 35 cm

Private collection





and the Impressionist master, through simple evolution, became a Neo-Impressionist.

Another sign of affiliation was that Divisionism appeared for the first time at the final exhibition of the Impressionist painters. These masters had welcomed the innovative works of Seurat and Signac as positive additions to their tradition. Only later, in the face of the importance of a new movement, was the split truly made, and the Neo-Impressionists exhibited separately.

If Neo-Impressionism resulted directly from Impressionism, then it also owes much to Delacroix, as we have seen. It was the fusion and development of the

Overschie

1906

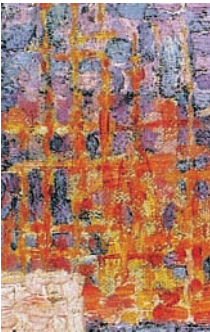
Watercolour on light pencil sketch, 17 x 24.6 cm
Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Besançon





doctrines of Delacroix and the Impressionists; the return to one's tradition combined with all the advantages of the contribution of the others. We will here prove the origins of Georges Seurat and Paul Signac.

Georges Seurat followed the course of the École des Beaux-Arts; but his intelligence, his will, his methodical and clear spirit, his pure taste, and his painter's eye kept him safe from the depressing influence of the school. Assiduously frequenting museums and leafing through books on art and engravings in the libraries, he drew strength from the study of the classical masters to resist

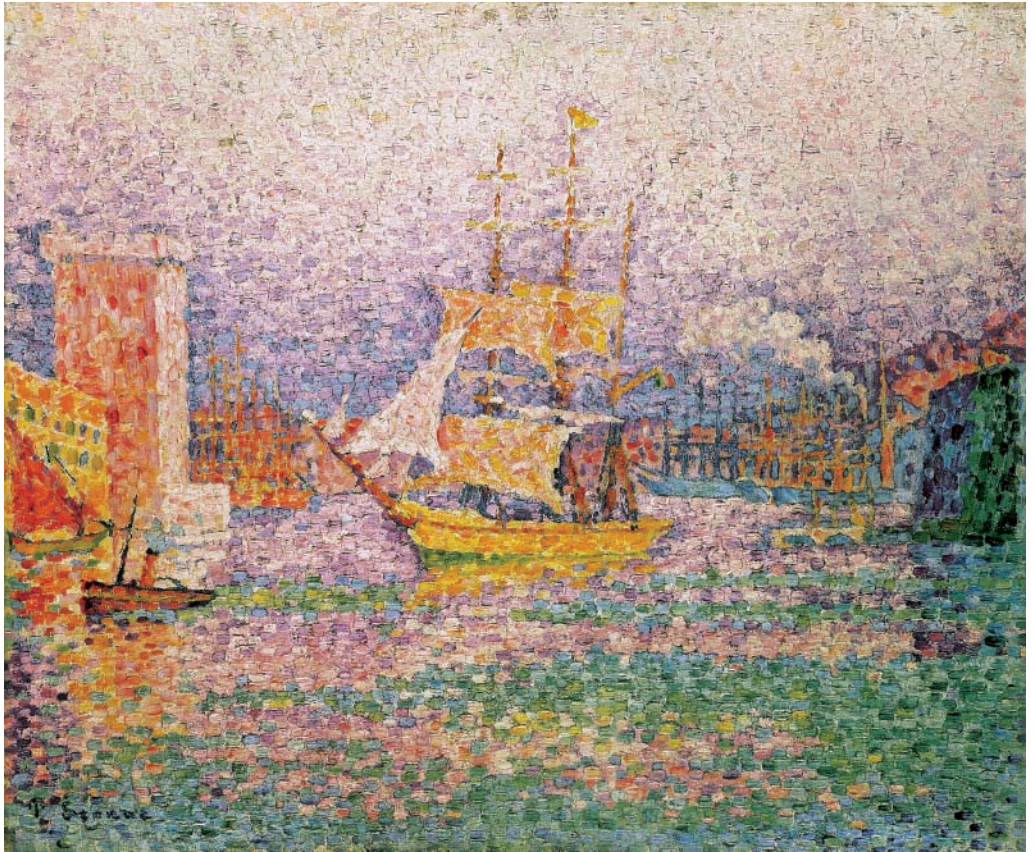


Harbour at Marseille

c. 1906

Oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

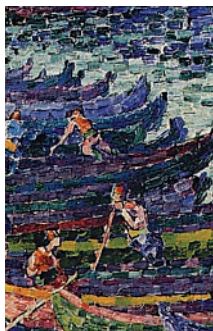




the teachings of his professors. During his studies he stated that it was the laws of analogy which regulated line, chiaroscuro, colour, and composition, equally for Rubens as for Raphael, and for Michelangelo as for Delacroix: rhythm, measurement, and contrast.



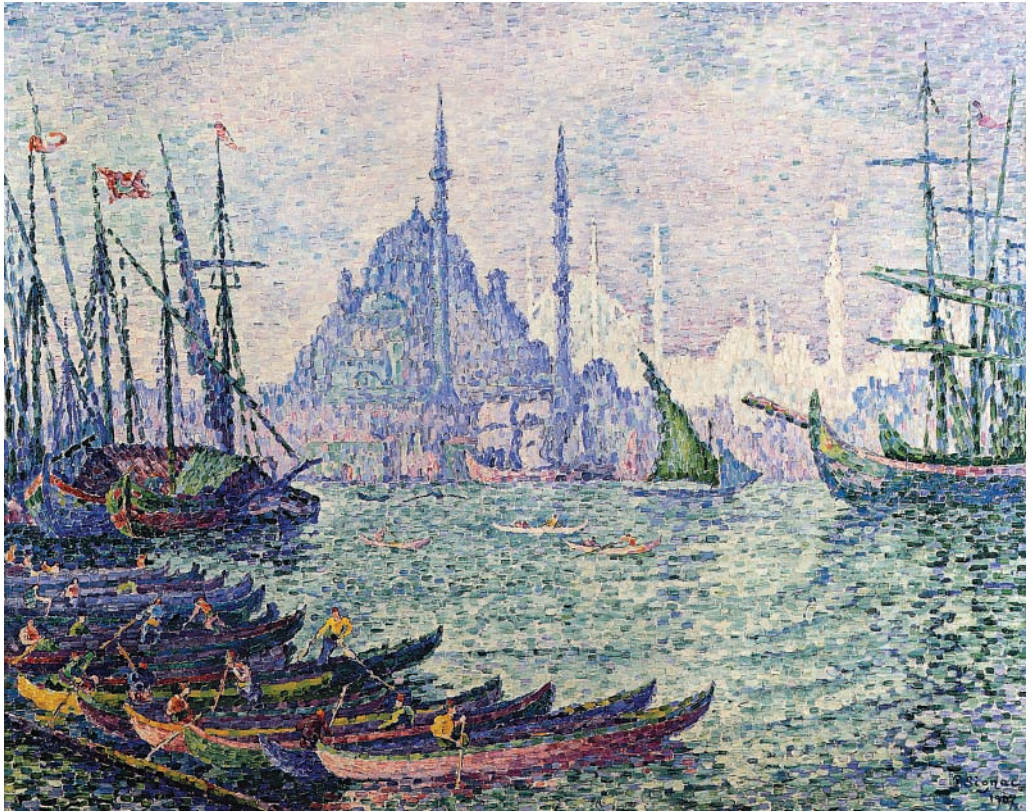
He lengthily analysed Delacroix's work, and easily found in it the application of traditional laws, equally in colour and in line, and clearly saw that there remained more to be done to achieve the progress that the Romantic master had caught a glimpse of.

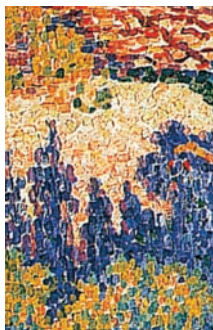


Golden Horn. Minarets

1907

Oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm
Private collection, Munich





Seurat's studies resulted in a discerning and rich theory of contrasts, to which he thus submitted all of his works. He first applied chiaroscuro, and then being rendered master of tonal contrasts, he treated colour shade in the same spirit. From 1882, he applied colour to the laws of contrast and painted with separated elements whilst using blended shades, without, it is true, having had any influence from the Impressionists, of whom at this period he did not even know existed.

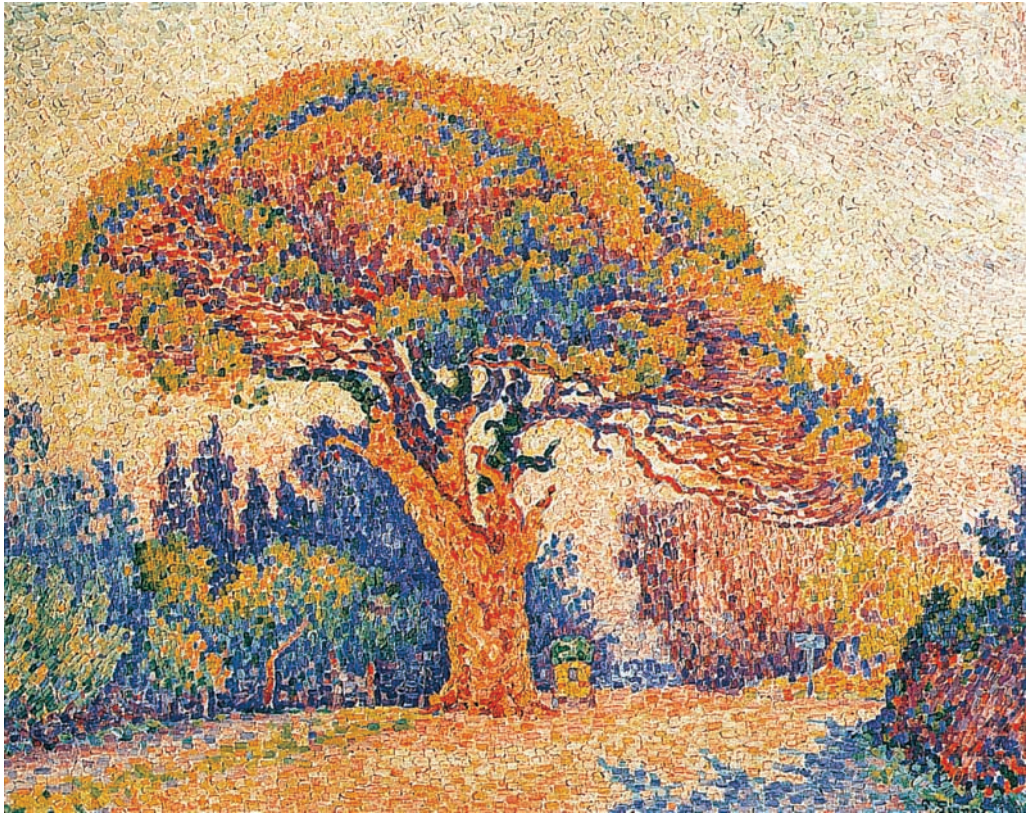
Paul Signac, on the other hand, submitted to the influence of Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, and Guillaumin

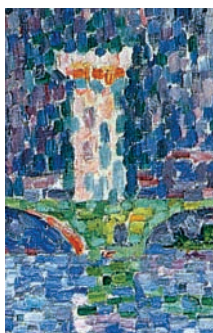
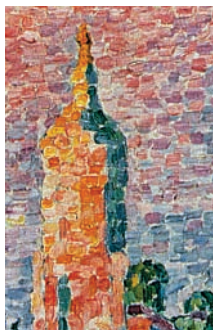
The Pine Tree at Saint-Tropez

1909

Oil on canvas, 72 x 92 cm

The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow





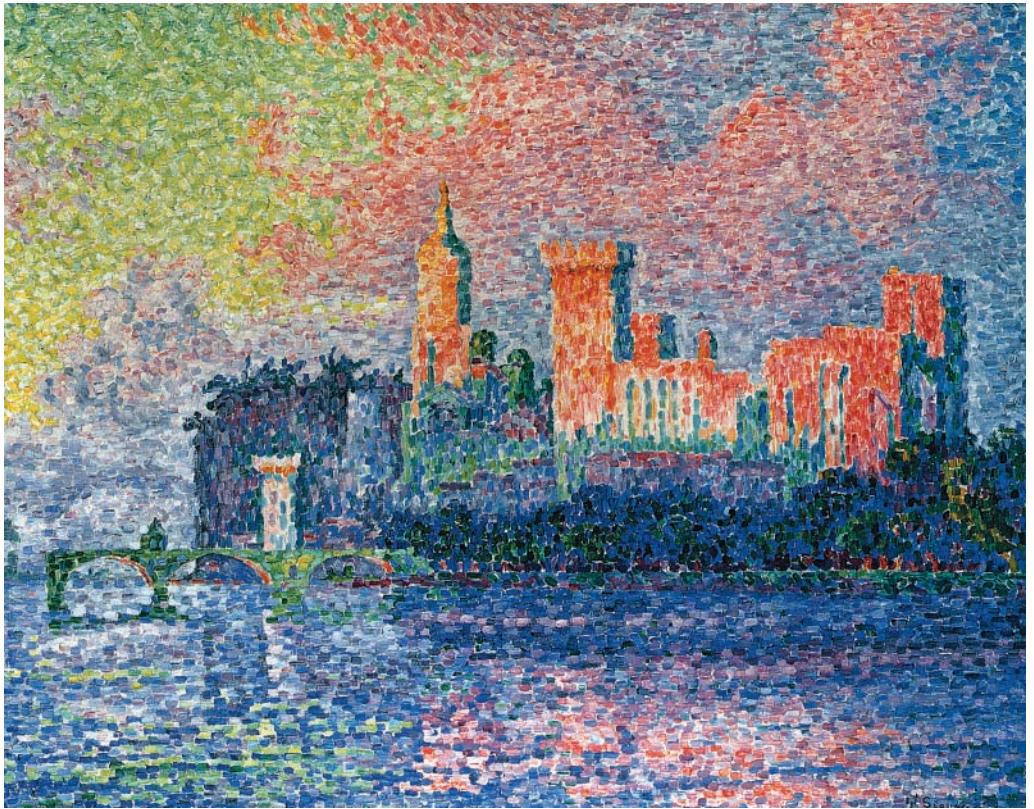
from the time of his first studies in 1883. He did not frequent a single workshop, but it was by working from nature that he chanced across the harmonious colours of simultaneous contrast. Later, by admiringly studying the works of the Impressionist masters, he believed that he found there the use of a scientific technique. It seemed to him that the multicoloured elements, of which optical blending reconstructed the shades in their paintings, were methodically separated, and that the reds, yellow, purples, blues, and greens were assembled after definitive rules; the effects of contrast which he had

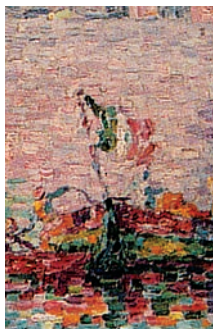
Le château des Papes (Castle of the Popes)

1909

Oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris





observed in nature, but which ignored the laws, appeared to him to be theoretically applied by them.

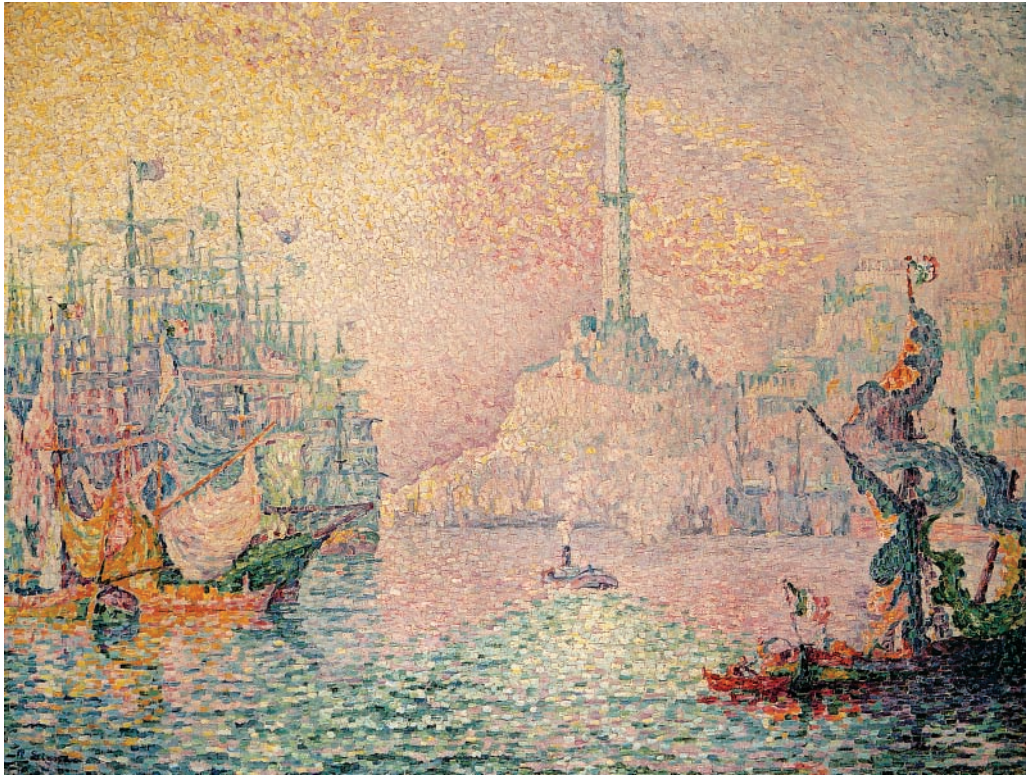
Once he knew the theory, he could minutely examine the contrasts, which up until that point he had only noticed empirically and with more or less accuracy, according to the feelings they represented.

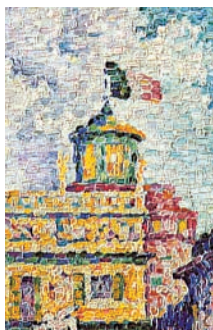
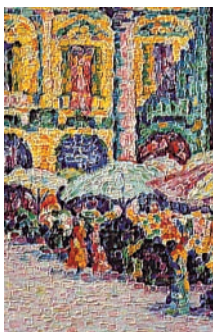
In 1884, Seurat and Signac met at the first exhibition of the group of Indépendants, held in the courtyards of the Tuileries. Seurat exhibited his *Bathers*, which had in the same year been refused by the Salon. Signac was represented by four landscapes, painted with only the

Port of Genoa

1909

Oil on canvas, 89 x 116 cm
Private collection, London





colours of the rainbow spectrum, applied to the canvas by small flicks of paint, in the manner of the Impressionists, but already without mixing combined colours on the palette. There, contrast could be observed, as well as optically blended elements, although they did not every time have the accuracy and the balance of Seurat's rigorous method.

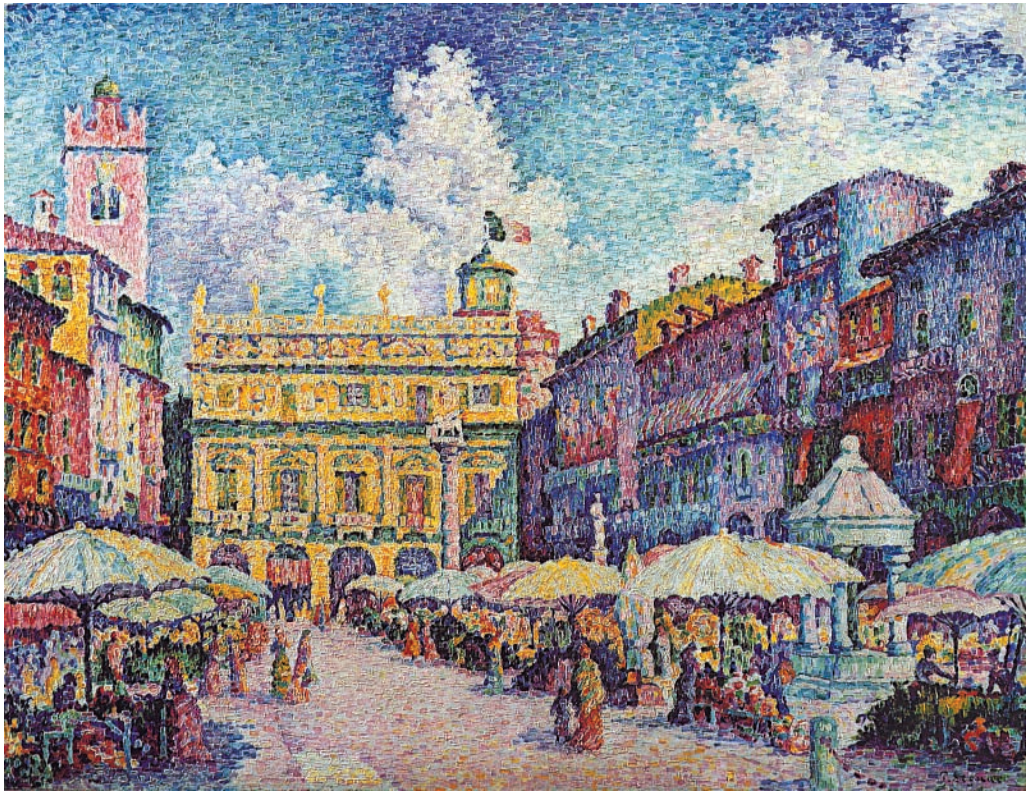
Illuminating their mutual research, Seurat had soon adopted the simplified palette of the Impressionists, and Signac drew upon Seurat's very valuable contribution: the methodical and balanced separation of the elements.

Market of Verona

1909

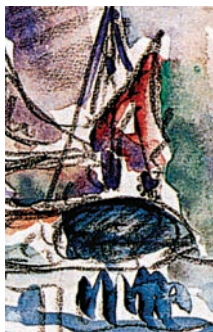
Oil on canvas, 89 x 116 cm

Private collection





So, as we have seen at the beginning of the chapter, both artists, along with Camille and Lucien Pissarro who were also enthusiastic, represented the beginnings of Neo-Impressionism at the Impressionist exhibition of 1886.



The truth is that there are as many differences between the Neo-Impressionists as there are, for example, between the Impressionists. When a Neo-Impressionist makes such and such a sacrifice of the elements for the sake of his work's meaning (which will gain more interest



La Rochelle

1911

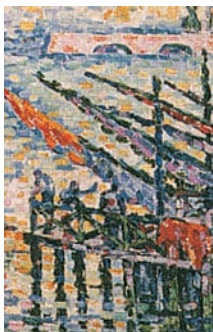
Watercolour on light pencil sketch, 23.2 x 28.5 cm
Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, Paris





by contrasts of light than by the pursuit of local colours, or vice versa), his personality, if he has one, will make an appearance amongst a hundred others which we will mention, to be most discriminately represented in its frankness.

This is a technique which gave Georges Seurat his great compositions; Van Rysselberghe his gracious or powerful portraits; Van de Velde his decorative canvasses; and allowed Maximilien Luce to express streets, people, and work; gave Cross the rhythm of movement in harmonious décor; to Charles Angrand,

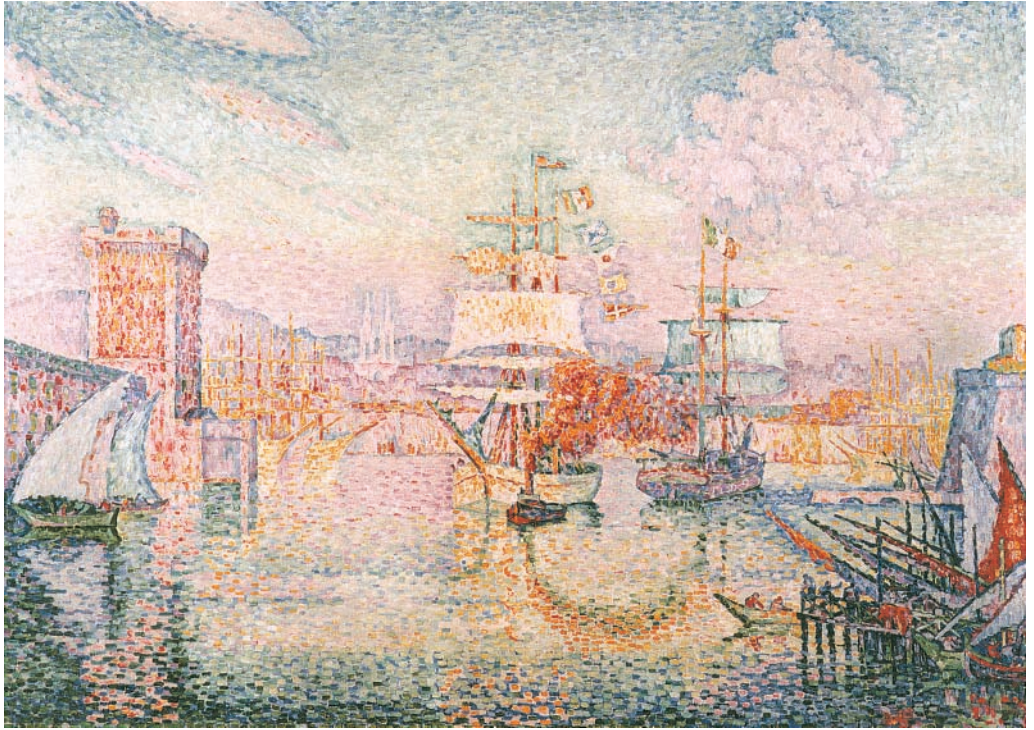


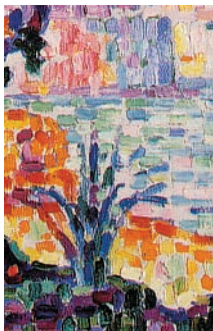
Marseille Port Entrance

1911

Oil on canvas, 116.5 x 162.5 cm

On loan from the Musée d'Orsay, Musée Cantini, Marseille





country life; and to Petitjean, the graceful nudity of nymphs. Can this technique, which could soften such distinct temperaments, and produce such varied works, without any bad faith or ignorance, be accused of destroying the personalities of those who adopt it?

The discipline of Divisionism was no harder for them than rhyme is for a poet. Far from harming their inspiration, it contributed to giving their works a strict and poetic appearance, without *trompe l'oeil* or witticism.

Antibes. Eucalyptus

1913

Oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm

Suzuki Fine Art Corporation, London

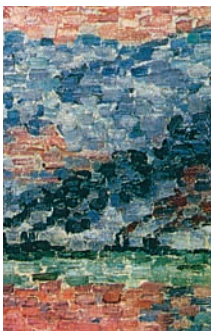




DIVISIONIST PAINTING

The Divisionist painting of the Neo-Impressionists allowed for optical blending, purity, and proportion. Delacroix's shading, the dots of the Impressionists, Divisionist painting, these are all identical conventional methods; why admit the first two and not the third? It is not more troublesome, and offers advantages to the other two methods. Divisionism is decorative painting.

In the technique of the Neo-Impressionists, many people who were insensitive to the results of harmony,

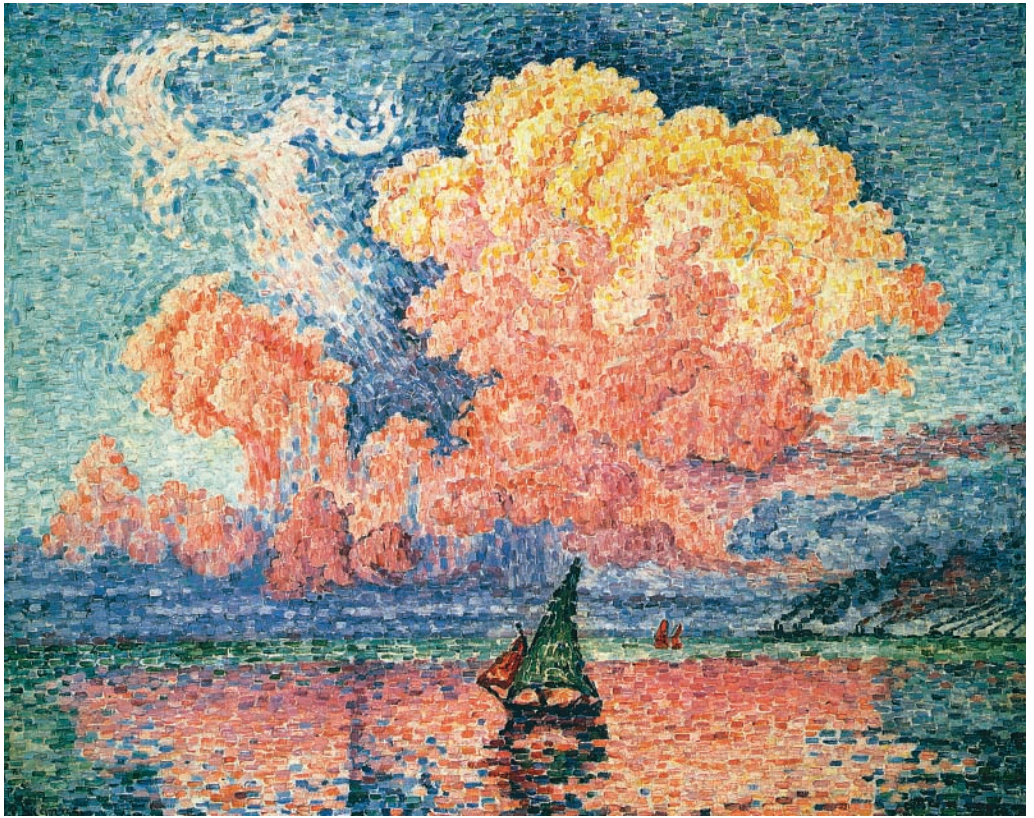


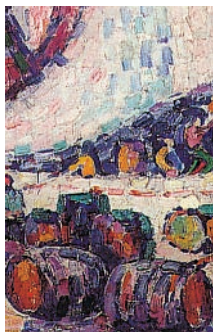
Pink Clouds (Antibes)

1916

Oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm

Scott M. Black Collection, Portland Museum of Art, Portland





colour, and light only saw the procedure. This procedure, which has the effect of assuring the results in question by the purity of the elements, their balanced proportions, and their perfect optical mixing, does not truly consist of Pointillism, as they imagined, but every brushstroke is of an indifferent shape, clean, without running, and of dimensions proportionate to the size of the painting.

Delacroix, with an equally exalted and reflective spirit, covered his canvas with passionate shading, but which separated colour with method and precision.

Dry Sails. Saint-Tropez

1916

Oil on canvas, 65 x 80 cm

Private collection





In this manner, which was suited to optical blending and the rapidly modelled meaning of shapes, he satisfied both concerns of colour and movement. Suppressing all earthy or dark colours in their palettes the Impressionists had reconstructed, with the small number of colours which remained to them, an enhanced set of tools. In this way they were driven towards a more fragmented technique than that of Delacroix, and instead of Romantic shading, they used minimal brushstrokes applied with the tip of a cautious brush and entangled in

Antibes. Morning Mist

1918-1919

Oil on wood, 18.5 x 24 cm

Private collection





a multicoloured web; dainty methods which are well adapted to an aesthetic of sudden and fleeting sensations.

The method of painting that the Impressionists used played, in certain cases, the expressive role of Delacroix's shading. As an example, when they copied the shape of an object, such as a leaf, wave, blade of grass, etc. But, in other cases, for example the Divisionism of the Neo-Impressionists, they only represented the coloured, separated, and juxtaposed elements, restorable through optical blending. It is clear, effectively, that whilst the Impressionists wanted to paint objects with a unified

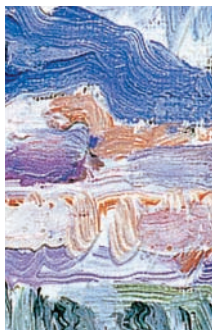
Antibes. Morning

1918-1918

Oil on canvas, 18.5 x 23.5 cm

Private collection





and flat appearance (blue skies, whites, and bare, monochrome paper) which they depicted with multicoloured dabs of paint, the role of these brushstrokes does not explain the need to adorn the surfaces by multiplying the coloured elements, without concern for replicating nature. The Impressionist brushstroke is therefore the transition between Delacroix's shading and the Divisionist method of the Neo-Impressionists as, according to these circumstances, it plays the role of either one or other of these techniques.

Divisionism is a complex system of harmony, an aesthetic rather than a technique. The use of points is

Antibes. Grey Weather

1918-1919

Oil on cardboard canvas, 18.5 x 24 cm

Private collection





nothing more than a method. To divide is to seek the power and harmony of colour by representing light coloured by its pure elements, and by using optical blending of these pure, separate, and measured elements according to the essential laws of contrasts and degradation. Purity, that is to say, luminosity and intensity of shades; gradation enhances its lustre; and contrast, governing the agreement of similarities and analogy of opposites, subordinates these powerful but balanced elements, with the rules of harmony. The root of Divisionism is contrast: is contrast not art?

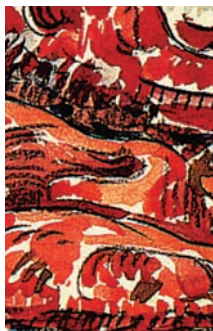
Antibes. Yellow Sunset

1918-1919

Oil on cardboard canvas, 18.5 x 24 cm

Private collection





"Art is Harmony; Harmony is analogy of Contrasts, the analogy of Similarities, of tone, of shade, and of line. Tone, which is to say the light and the dark; shade, which is to say red and its complementary green; orange and its complementary blue; yellow and its complementary purple.... The method of expression is the optical blending of tones, of shades, and of their reactions (shadows following very rigid laws)."

Delacroix's shading, the Impressionists' dabbing technique, and the Divisionist painting of the Neo-Impressionists are the identical conventional methods of which the function is to give colour more brilliance and

Still Life

c. 1918-1920 (or 1926?)
Watercolour and pencil, 32.2 x 49.7 cm
Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock





splendour by suppressing all flat shades and the artifice of painters to embellish the surface of a painting.

The two first techniques, shading and Pointillism, are now admitted, but not yet the third, Divisionism. What is more conventional than the other processes if not Divisionism? Why is it more troublesome? A simple coloured element, it can, even by its impersonality, lend itself to all subjects.

And, if this is a merit for an art process to match the process of nature, let us note that this method uniquely paints with the colours of the solar spectrum, degrading to infinity, and it does not allow for one square millimetre of dull paint.

Still Life with Jug

1919

Graphite and watercolour, 12.7 x 27.7 cm

Robert Lehman Collection

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





The sought-for effect of the Neo-Impressionists which was assured by Divisionism was the maximum attainment of light, colour, and harmony. Indeed, these Divisionist painting techniques, when seen at too close a distance, may shock, but time will be quick to make them disappear. In a few years, the impasto will be reduced, the colours will melt into one another, and the painting is then only too plain.

"One should not be able to smell the painting," Rembrandt stated. When listening to a symphony, one does not go sit amongst the brass, but rather in the seats where the sounds of the different instruments blend in the

Still Life with Peppers

c. 1919-1920

Watercolour over light grease pencil, 30.5 x 44.5 cm

Private collection





manner desired by the composer. Pleasure can then be derived from breaking down the sheet music, note by note, to study the work of orchestration.

If Delacroix could have been aware of all the resources of Divisionism, he would have conquered every difficulty in his decorations of the Salon de la Paix, in the Hotel de Ville. The panels that he needed to cover were obscure, and he could never manage to give them illumination. He complained in his journal of not having been able to find the brightness in this setting that he could in his sketches, despite redoing them several times.



La pièce d'eau de la maison de Cézanne au Jas de Bouffan

1920

Watercolour over light grease pencil, 30 x 45 cm
Musée de l'Annonciade, Saint-Tropez





EDUCATING THE EYE

Why, therefore, does Divisionism receive so much hostility, when it has many advantages which prevail over other techniques? It is in France that all art innovation is rejected, not only insensitive, but hostile to colour.

And yet, a double grievance was held against the Neo-Impressionists: they constituted an innovation, and the paintings were created in line with a shining technique of unaccustomed lustre.

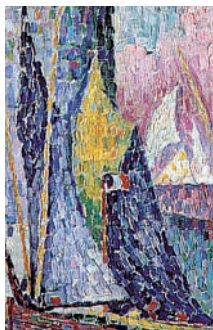


Entrance to the La Rochelle Port

1921

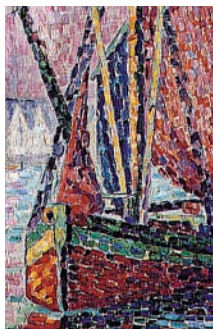
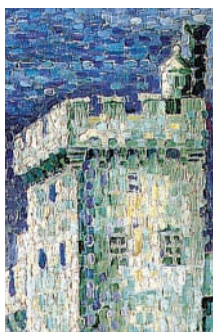
Oil on canvas, 130 x 162 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris





It is useless to draw up a list here of all the innovative painters who were jeered at in this century, and who then enforced their particular visions. These injustices, this struggle, and these triumphs: this is the history of art.

First of all, all new expressions were disputed; then, slowly, they were gotten used to and accepted. We may perceive the reason for why this technique was considered shocking; the colour which caused such outrage seems to be powerful and harmonious. The subconscious education of the public made criticisms, to the point where they were prepared to see things of



Saint-Paul-de-Vence

1921

Watercolour over light grease pencil, 29.5 x 44 cm
Musée de l'Albertina, Vienna





reality rather as that which was created by the innovator: his formula, yesterday honoured, became their criterion. And, on his behalf, the original effort will then be displayed and scorned, until the day when he triumphs. Each generation is afterwards astonished by their mistake, but later backslides.

Around 1850, this was written on the subject of Corot's paintings, as, yes, the gentle Corot offended the tastes of the public: "How can Corot see nature as he represents it to us? ... It is in vain that Corot wants to

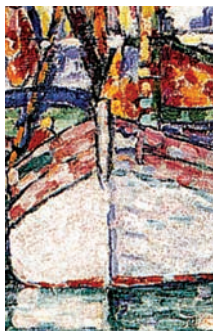
Blessing of the Tuna Fleet at Groix

1923

Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.7 cm

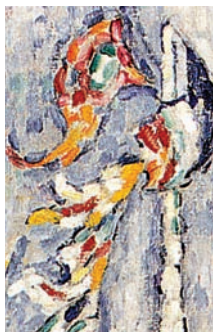
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis





impose upon us his way of painting trees; this is not a tree, but smoke. For our part, on our walks, we have never been given the vision of trees resembling those painted by Corot."

And twenty-five years later, after triumphant and unarguable success, Corot's name was invoked to criticise Claude Monet: "Monet sees everything in blue! Blue terrains, blue grass, blue trees. Corot's beautiful trees, full of mystery and poetry, look; this is what we have done to you! You have been soaked in a washerwoman's blue bucket of dye!"



Paimpol Port

1925

Watercolour, gouache, and charcoal, 24 x 30 cm

Private collection





The same generation does not double the necessary effort to assimilate a new way of seeing. Critics of Delacroix had to give in to his followers. But these followers did not understand the Colourists who succeeded him, the Impressionists. These, in their turn, triumphed, and today, admirers of Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, and Guillaumin have abused the reputation of good taste that their choice acquired for them, when they condemned Neo-Impressionism.

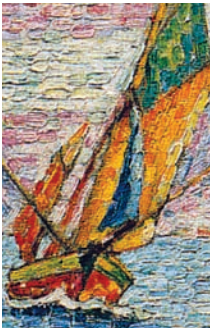
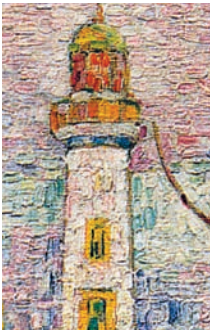
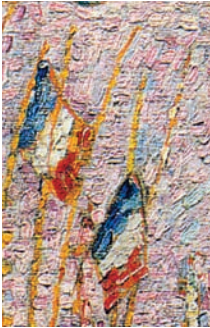
Lighthouse at Groix

1925

Oil on canvas, 74 x 92.4 cm

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





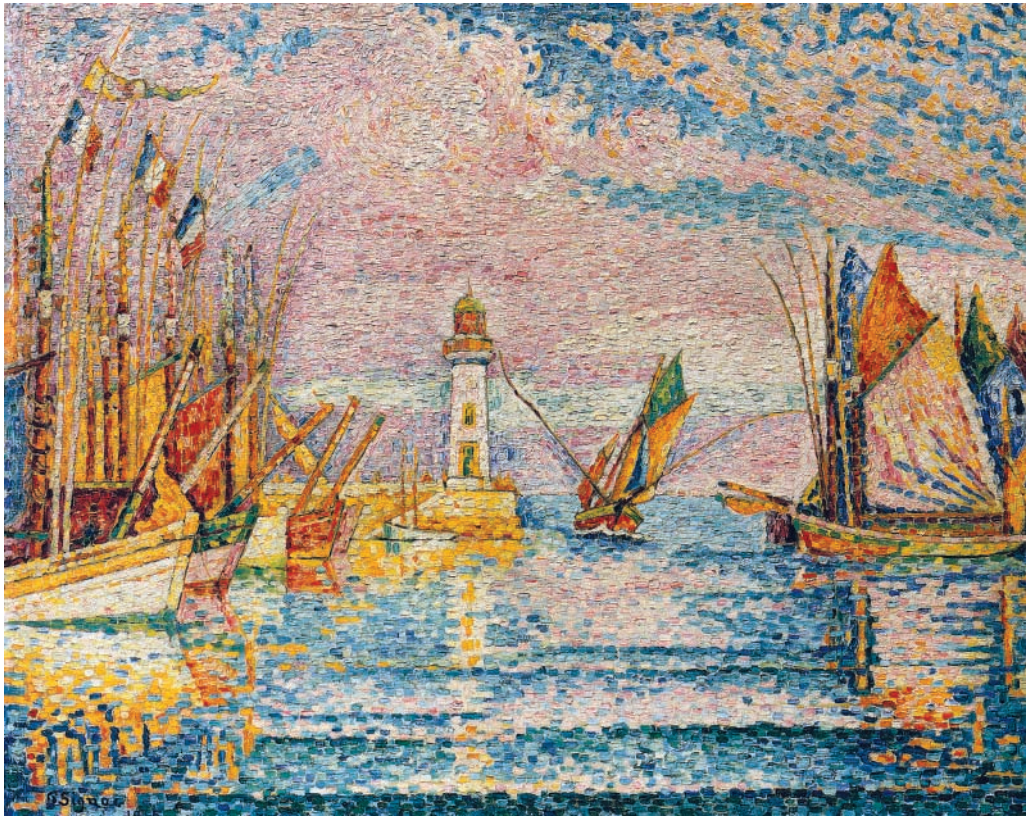
It takes more than a quarter of a century for an evolution in art to be accepted. Delacroix struggled from 1830 to 1863, whilst Jongkind and the Impressionists struggled from 1860 to 1890. Neo-Impressionism appeared around 1886. According to the normal development of the preceding research, following this tradition, it is therefore entitled to several years of struggle and work before its contribution shall be accepted.

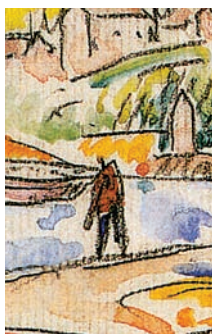
Sometimes even financial interest would coalesce with ignorance to impede an innovative and troublesome movement.

Concarneau

c. 1925

Black chalk and watercolour, 27.8 x 40.1 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





Innovation most especially encounters bad intentions when it tends more towards light or more towards colour. Changes in the theme of painting, correlating to the variations of the literary world, are easily accepted by these same people who are startled by the slightest new lustre. The deformations of Rosicrucianism certainly did not provoke as much amusement as Monet's blue tools, or Cross' purple trees. Rarely does a drawing or a statue excite the anger of a naïve public, but an audacity of colours: always.

The Sanctuary of Notre-Dame, Paris

1925

Watercolour sketch over light grease pencil, 24.4 x 18.2 cm
Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Besançon





All pure and sincere colour shocks, only flat, smooth, muted, and dull colours are appreciated. If half of a figure is covered in bitumen or brown colour, without any pretext of shadow, the public will voluntarily accept it, but not when it is coloured in blue or purple. There is, effectively, a science of colour, simple and easy, which each person should learn and the knowledge of which would prevent so many foolish judgements. This can summarise in ten lines what should be taught to children in primary school, in the first hour of the first basic drawing lesson. These laws of colour can be learnt in a

The Viaduct of Pont de Bercy

1925

Watercolour over light grease pencil, 28 x 44.3 cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris





few hours, and are contained within two pages by Chevreur and Rood. The eye can be perfected by these laws. However, since Charles Blanc, the situation has hardly changed. We have done nothing to propagate this special education. It is this simple science of contrasts which forms the solid foundation of Neo-Impressionism. Outside of this science, there are few beautiful lines or perfect colours. If, each day, we see the services which this science can render to an artist, by guiding and strengthening his inspiration, we will still look for the damage that it could cause.

La Rochelle

c. 1920-1928

Black crayon and watercolour, 25.7 x 40.2 cm

Robert Lehman Collection

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





To be a Colourist, effectively, does not mean applying reds, greens, and yellows next to each other without rule or measure. It is necessary to know how to order these different elements, sacrificing some to give value to others. Noise and music are not synonymous. The juxtaposition of colours, as intense as they are, without observing contrast, is to colour in, not to colour.

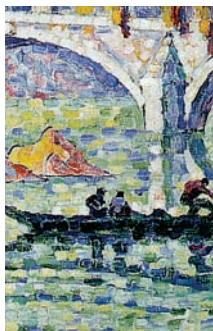
One of the main accusations levelled at the Neo-Impressionists is that they are too knowledgeable for artists: enmeshed in their research, it can be said that they cannot freely express their feelings.

Still Life with Fruit

1926

Watercolour and pencil on paper, 30.5 x 42.2 cm
Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock





Let us respond that the least of the Oriental weavers knew as much as they. These ideas that they are being reproached for are hardly complicated. The Neo-Impressionists were not themselves scholars. But, to not know the laws of contrast and harmony, that is to be too ignorant.

Why then does the possession of these rules of beauty cancel out their feelings? Is a musician, because he knows $3/2$ time, is in rapport with harmony, and is a painter, because he does not ignore the fact that orange



Le Pont Royal at High Tide (Paris)

1926

Oil on canvas, 89 x 116 cm

Private collection





forms an earthy colour with green and purple, less of an artist susceptible to emotion and capable of moving us?

The Neo-Impressionists were not slaves to science. They wielded it to suit their inspiration; they put what they knew to the service of what they valued. Can we reproach the young painters for not having neglected this essential part of their art? Especially when we see that a genius such as Delacroix had to apply himself to study these laws of colour and therein could find gain.

The public have many more concerns on the subject of a painting than its harmony. Even the majority of

Treguier. The Market

1927

Watercolour and pencil on paper, 27.6 x 39.3 cm
Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock





painters are inattentive to the charms of line and colour. It is rare to see artists who think along the lines of Ruskin: "Degradation is to colour what curve is to line," and who agree with Delacroix: "There are lines which are monsters, two parallels." Painters in our era have other preoccupations than these principles of beauty. We can affirm that there are less than one hundred painters who have bothered to study this primordial part of their art.

The majority of criticisms, effectively, can hardly fault the technical education, which realises the agreement of

Paris: Le Place Dauphine

1828

Watercolour and black crayon, 27.8 x 43.2 cm

Robert Lehman Collection

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





two shades or the difference of two lines. They judge, rather, by subject, trend, or genre, without being preoccupied on the "painting" aspect.

This hatred or indifference for colour, which the living Delacroix had suffered so much for, does it not still support the consequences? It seems that we are indifferent to his works. Let us remember the cold reception of the public to his exhibition at the École des Beaux-Arts, and who ran enthusiastically to that of Bastien-Lepage, open at the same time, nearby, next to the Chimay Hotel. And never, in the long stops that we

Le Croisic

1928

Watercolour over graphite and black chalk, 25 x 40.8 cm

Robert Lehman Collection

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





have made at the Saint-Sulpice in front of the decoration of the Chapel of the Holy Angels, have we ever been troubled by a single visitor.

In front of one of Delacroix's paintings, what exasperated so many people was less the passion of his Romanticism than his shading and his intense colour; before the works of the Impressionists, it was the novelty of their brushstrokes and their use of colour. And, in the case of the Neo-Impressionists, what truly baffled was more the Divisionist brushstrokes, but also the unusual brilliance of their canvasses.

Groix. The Tuna Boats

1929

Watercolour and pencil on paper, 26 x 43.2 cm
Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock





Perhaps the years have helped to complete their education. Let us hope that in these times we will be more sensitive to harmony, we will not doubt again the power of colour; colour will be more calmly tested, and let us say that the more vivid colours of a painter are shy in comparison with those which adorn nature. At least a great progress has been made thanks to the Impressionist masters. Many viewers who were astonished by or otherwise protested these Impressionist paintings now understand that Monet and Pissarro blend in perfect

Paris: Pont Royal and the Gare d'Orsay

c. 1929-1930

Black crayon and watercolour, 28.8 x 43.3 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





harmony with Delacroix, Corot, Rousseau, and Jongkind, who they have developed upon.

Similarly, the public will perhaps one day recognise that the Neo-Impressionists were the true representatives of the Colourist tradition, of which Delacroix and the Impressionists were, in their day, the champions. Which artists can, more justifiably, lay claim to these two patronages? Neither those who painted in black, white, or grey, nor those who the Colourists remember as “a pile of old, rotten vegetables”, indicated by Ruskin as the supreme degree of ugliness which can attain colour,

Nantes

c. 1930

Watercolour, 29 x 43.7 cm

James Dycke Collection, Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock





nor those who painted with flat shades. As these processes are without relation to the principles of the masters, the Neo-Impressionists lay claim to this title.

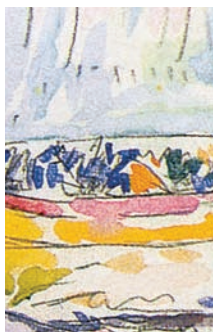
It is perhaps easy to paint more luminously than the Neo-Impressionists, but not in removing or adding colour, rather in darkening it. Their colour is placed amidst a range which, in a chromatic circle, goes from the centre, white, to the circumference, black. And this place thus assures a maximum of saturation, power, and beauty.

View of the Seine at High Tide from the Pont des Arts

c. 1931

Watercolour over light grease pencil, 27.5 x 43.5 cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris





We must state that it was the Neo-Impressionists who knew how to draw the dual results of luminosity and the most colour from existing resources: next to one of their canvasses and despite the criticism that they may elsewhere encounter, all paintings, no matter how great the quality of art, will seem dark or discoloured.

Of course, we do not depend on the talent of a painter for more or less luminosity and colour in his paints; we know that with white and black we can silence masterworks and can paint coloured and luminous works without merit.

Saint-Raphaël

1931

Watercolour and pencil, 28.5 x 42.5 cm

Private collection





In remembering the words of Delacroix: “Cowardly painting is the painting of a coward,” the Neo-Impressionists can be proud of their austere and simple painting. And if, better than technique, it is passion which creates an artist, they can be assured: they have the fruitful passion of light, beyond colour and harmony.

In any case, they do not have to redo what they have already done; they have had the perilous honour of producing a new fashion, of expressing a personal ideal.

They could progress, but they have already too well understood the importance and charm of the foundations



Arles. The House of Van Gogh

1933

Watercolour over light grease pencil, 27.5 x 40 cm

Private collection





of purity and contrast to ever contemplate renouncing them. Little by little they broke away from the shackles of the beginning of Divisionism, which allowed them to express their dreams of colour, and to soften and develop, promising still more productive resources.

And if one of them does not show himself already an artist who, by his genius, will be able to impose this technique, they will at least have served to simplify the task. The triumphant Colourist only has to appear; his palette has already been prepared for him.

Boats in the Port of Ajaccio

c. 1935

Watercolour and pencil, 28 x 43 cm

Musée du Louvre



Index

A

<i>Age of Harmony</i>	119
<i>Antibes. Eucalyptus</i>	185
<i>Antibes. Grey Weather</i>	195
<i>Antibes. Morning</i>	193
<i>Antibes. Morning Mist</i>	191
<i>Antibes. Yellow Sunset</i>	197
<i>Arles. The House of Van Gogh</i>	245
<i>Asnières Study (Charles Torquet Seen from Behind)</i>	9
<i>The Asnières Viaduct</i>	141

B

<i>Blessing of the Tuna Fleet at Groix</i>	211
<i>Boats in the Port of Ajaccio</i>	247
<i>The Bonadventure Pine. Opus 239</i>	113

C

<i>Cape Noli</i>	135
<i>Cassis. Cape Canaille. Opus 200</i>	75

<i>Castellane</i>	147
<i>Clipper. Opus 155</i>	57
<i>Collioure. Faubourg Beach. Opus 166</i>	61
<i>Collioure. The Beach Town. Opus 165</i>	59
<i>Concarneau</i>	217
<i>Concarneau. Calm Morning. Opus 219 (Larghetto)</i>	91
<i>Concarneau. Return of the Ships. Opus 222 (Presto Finale)</i>	97

D

<i>The Dining Room. Opus 152</i>	51
<i>The Division between Bois-Colombes</i>	37
<i>The Division. Bois-Colombes. Opus 13</i>	45
<i>Dry Sails. Saint-Tropez</i>	189

E

<i>Entrance to the La Rochelle Port</i>	207
<i>Evening Calm, Concarneau, Opus 220 (Allegro Maestoso)</i>	93

F

<i>Fécamp. Sun</i>	41
<i>The Fishing Boat (Saint-Tropez)</i>	153

G

<i>Gasometers at Clinchy</i>	47
<i>Golden Horn. Minarets</i>	171
<i>Grand Canal (Venice)</i>	155
<i>The Green Sail (Venice)</i>	151
<i>Grenelle Bridge</i>	137
<i>Groix. The Tuna Boats</i>	235

H

<i>Harbour at Marseille</i>	169
<i>Herblay. Shore. Opus 204</i>	77
<i>Herblay. Sunset. Opus 206</i>	79
<i>Houses on the Harbour. Saint-Tropez. Opus 237</i>	107

J

<i>The Jetty at Cassis. Opus 198</i>	73
--------------------------------------	----

L

<i>La pièce d'eau de la maison de Cézanne au Jas de Bouffan</i>	205
<i>La Rochelle</i>	181, 223
<i>La Seine. Quai d'Austerlitz (The Seine from Pont d'Austerlitz)</i>	23
<i>Le Brick</i>	123
<i>Le château des Papes (Castle of the Popes)</i>	175
<i>Le Croisic</i>	233
<i>Le Pont Royal at High Tide (Paris)</i>	227
<i>Les Andelys</i>	49
<i>The Lighthouse at Biarritz</i>	159
<i>Lighthouse at Groix</i>	215

M

<i>Market of Verona</i>	179
<i>Marseille Port Entrance</i>	183
<i>The Milliners</i>	39
<i>Mirabeau Bridge</i>	149

N

<i>Nantes</i>	239
<i>Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde (La Bonne-Mère), Marseilles</i>	161

O

<i>Opus 217. Against the Enamel of a Background Rhythmic with Beats and Angles, Tones and Tints, Portrait of M. Félix Fénéon in 1890</i>	89
<i>Overschie</i>	167

P

<i>Paimpol Port</i>	213
<i>Paris: Le Place Dauphine</i>	231
<i>Paris: Pont Royal and the Gare d'Orsay</i>	237
<i>Paul Signac, Georges Seurat</i>	4
<i>The Pine Tree at Saint-Tropez</i>	173
<i>Pink Clouds (Antibes)</i>	187
<i>Place de Clichy</i>	69
<i>Place des Lices, Saint-Tropez</i>	111
<i>The Port and Sunset. Saint-Tropez. Opus 236</i>	105
<i>Port of Genoa</i>	177
<i>Port of Saint-Cast. Opus 209</i>	85
<i>Port-en-Bessin. La Valleuse</i>	21
<i>Port-en-Bessin. The Fish Market</i>	19
<i>Portrieux. Masts. Opus 182</i>	65
<i>Portrieux. The Tide. Opus 190</i>	67

Q

<i>Quai de Clichy. Sun</i>	55
----------------------------	----

R

<i>The Red Buoy</i>	121
<i>Red Silk Stockings</i>	11
<i>River's Edge. The Seine at Herbley. Opus 208</i>	81
<i>The Road to Gennevilliers</i>	13
<i>Rotterdam. Steamships</i>	163
<i>Rue Caulaincourt</i>	17

S

<i>Sailing Boats in Saint-Tropez Harbour</i>	109
<i>Sails and Pines</i>	131
<i>Saint-Briac. Beacons. Opus 210</i>	87
<i>Saint-Briac, Le Béchet</i>	29
<i>Saint-Briac. Mild Breeze from the Northwest</i>	31
<i>Saint-Briac. The Cross of the Sailors. High Tide</i>	27
<i>Saint-Briac. The Mill</i>	25

<i>Saint-Paul-de-Vence</i>	209
<i>Saint Peter's Square</i>	15
<i>Saint-Raphaël</i>	243
<i>Saint-Tropez</i>	143
<i>Saint-Tropez, fontaine des Lices</i>	129
<i>Saint-Tropez. Lighthouse</i>	127
<i>Saint-Tropez. The Artist's Garden</i>	139
<i>Saint-Tropez. The Terrace</i>	133
<i>The Sanctuary of Notre-Dame, Paris</i>	219
<i>Setting Sun. Sardine Fishing. Opus 221 (Adagio)</i>	95
<i>The Shore. Asnières</i>	35
<i>Sisteron</i>	145
<i>Snow. Boulevard de Clichy, Paris</i>	43
<i>Snow in Montmartre</i>	53
<i>Stern of a Boat. Opus 175</i>	63
<i>Still Life</i>	199
<i>Still Life with a Book</i>	33
<i>Still Life with Fruit</i>	225
<i>Still Life with Jug</i>	201

<i>Still Life with Peppers</i>	203
<i>Storm in Saint-Tropez</i>	125
<i>Sunday Afternoon</i>	71
<i>Sunset on the City. Saint-Tropez. Opus 233</i>	103

T

<i>Treguier. The Market</i>	229
<i>Tugboats in Rotterdam</i>	165
<i>Two Cypresses. Opus 241 (Mistal)</i>	115

V

<i>Venice. Basin of Saint-Marc</i>	157
<i>The Viaduct of Pont de Bercy</i>	221
<i>View of the Seine at High Tide from the Pont des Arts</i>	241

W

<i>Woman by a Lamp</i>	83
<i>Woman Combing her Hair. Opus 227</i>	99
<i>Woman with a Parasol</i>	117
<i>Women at the Well</i>	101

